January 1968

NAMRATĀ
The Food of Experience

DONALD H. BISHOP
First Impressions of the *Bhagavad-Gita*

SARALA DEVI
A New Conception of Citizenship

PETER M. SMITH
On Education

PREMA NANDAKUMAR
The Prose-Poems of Subramania Bharati

BOOKS REVIEWED INCLUDE

Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists; *Shintô: At the Fountain-Head of Japan*; *Is Reality Meaningful?*; *Meaning for Man*; *What's It All About and What Am I?*; *Shilappadikaram*; *Love Songs of Chandidas*; *Commonwealth Poems of Today*

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THE ARYAN PATH

VOLUME XXXIX - NO. 1

oint out the 'Way'
wever dimly and lost among the host —
does the Evening Star
those who tread their path in darkness.

Editor:
SOPHIA WADIA

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THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way" — however dimly, and
lost among the host — as does the evening star
to those who tread their path in darkness.

— *The Voice of the Silence*

VOL. XXXIX JANUARY 1968 No. 1

The Food of Experience

Kill out desire; but if thou killest it, take heed lest from the dead it should again arise.

Kill love of life; but if thou slayest Tanha, let this not be for thirst of life eternal, but to replace the fleeting by the everlasting.

Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at Nature's changeless laws.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THE IMPORTANCE and value of food are universally recognized; for every one knows that the life of the body cannot be sustained without taking in a sufficient quantity of nourishment. It is also increasingly understood that not only the quantity, but also the quality, must be adequate. Much scientific research has been done to ascertain the actual needs of the body and to determine what constitutes a properly balanced diet.

In the Vedānta philosophy the body is known as *annamaya koṣa,* the sheath made up of *anna,* food, and the ancients fully understood the importance of a pure diet. In the Greek tradition Pythagoras laid down the principles about diet and the preparation of meals:

> And in the first place, indeed, they endeavoured to learn the indications of symmetry, of labour, food and repose. In the next place, with respect to the preparation of food, they were nearly the first who attempted to employ themselves in it, and to define the mode in which it should be performed.
>
> (IAMBLICHUS: *Life of Pythagoras*)

Today, when millions are undernourished and whole regions threatened by starvation, when we have both over-feeding and famine, no-one can afford to treat the question of food casually or to be indifferent to the urgency of the problem.

As these lines are being penned (3 December 1967) the XIXth World Vegetarian Congress, meeting this year in India, has begun its Bombay

session and much talk and discussion about diet are going on. The question of vegetarianism versus "non-vegetarianism" is being widely discussed. (In passing it must be noted that the expression "non-vegetarianism" is a misnomer. All people eat vegetables! The "non-vegetarians" so-called are those who in addition to vegetables eat meat or flesh. We have, then, meat-eaters and those who abstain from meat in their diet.)

A vegetarian or non-meat diet is undoubtedly to be preferred to a meat diet, not only on grounds of compassion, but also for reasons of health and hygiene. It is not our purpose, however, to enlarge here upon the merits of abstaining from all flesh — from meat, fowl, and fish. We may revert to this subject on some future occasion. Let us here only point out that the matter of diet, while important, can never be an end in itself and that convinced non-meat-eaters frustrate their objective when they resort to fanaticism in their propaganda.

Gandhiji, an ardent advocate and practitioner of *ahiṁsā* (non-injury) and himself a strict vegetarian, warned against making of diet a fetish. He said:

> Experience teaches that animal food is unsuited to those who would curb their passions. But it is wrong to overestimate the importance of food in the formation of character or in subjugating the flesh. Diet is a powerful factor not to be neglected. But to sum up all religion in terms of diet, as is often done in India, is as wrong as it is to disregard all restraint in regard to diet and to give full reins to one's appetite.

And again, in another place:

> Many a man eating meat and with everybody but living in the fear of God is nearer his freedom than a man religiously abstaining from meat and many other things, but blaspheming God in every one of his acts.

Gandhiji affirmed again and again that the mental attitude is everything and warned against that species of self-delusion which permits a man to spare "the vipers of ill-will and anger" in his own bosom while boasting of abstaining from taking meat!

On this as on so many things Gandhiji echoes the principles of the Perennial Philosophy and his point of view is therefore in line with the teachings of Madame Blavatsky, who, summing up a discussion on vegetarianism, writes:

> Remember once for all that in all such questions we take a rational, and never a fanatical, view of things. If from illness or long habit a man cannot go without meat, why, by all means let him eat it. It is no crime; it will only retard his progress a little; for after all is said and done, the purely bodily actions and functions are of far less importance than

what a man *thinks* and *feels*, what desires he encourages in his mind, and allows to take root and grow there. (*The Key to Theosophy*)

The above clearly indicates that while a clean diet is indeed a great asset there are foods other than food for the body, which, nourishing the inner man, are of greater import. Physical food has always been a symbol of the other kinds of food, and an unconscious recognition of this fact is reflected in the language we use. Such expressions as "food for the mind," "food for thought," "spiritual food," etc., etc., denote the acknowledgement that there is nourishment other than physical.

Life is one and indivisible, and the law of analogy is the surest key to the unveiling of all mysteries. In the facts related to physical food, its necessity for keeping the body alive, its origin, its preparation, as also in the processes of eating, digestion, elimination, and assimilation, lies concealed the greater mystery of eating the food of experience.

The Upaniṣadic image of the two birds is not only beautiful poetry — it is an actual fact. There are two selves in Man, the Higher and the lower. These are the two birds, both perched on the same tree. One watches from above, a spectator, while the other eats the fruits on the tree and becomes bound thereby.

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* Śrī-Kṛṣṇa states:

I enter the earth supporting all living things by my power, and I am that property of sap which is taste, nourishing all the herbs and plants of the field. Becoming the internal fire of the living, I associate with the upward and downward breathing, and cause the four kinds of food to digest. (xv. 13-14)

The commentators usually explain the four kinds of food as solid, semi-solid, semi-liquid, and liquid, that is, food which must be masticated, and food to be sucked, licked, and drunk. But the statement yields a deeper meaning when interpreted as referring to the foods for the various sheaths of the soul. The body, *annamaya kośa,* is nourished by physical food. Similarly, the other *kośas* or sheaths require foods other than physical, consubstantial with their own nature. The Vedāntic classification includes four sheaths or *kośas,* besides the body.[1]

The inner man subsists on food, as does his physical body. He needs, besides physical nourishment, *prāṇa* or vitality, sensations and emotions, and thoughts and ideas.

Lord Buddha also mentions four kinds of food. He says:

There are four nutriments for the sustenance of beings born, and for the support of beings seeking birth. What are the four? Edible food, coarse

[1] These are, after *annamaya kośa*: *prāṇamaya kośa, manomaya kośa, vijñānamaya kośa,* and *ānandamaya kośa.*

and fine; sense-impression is the second; volitional thought the third; and consciousness, the fourth. (*Majjhima-Nikāya, Sutta* 9)

Thus there is full justification for interpreting the statement in the fifteenth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* quoted earlier, as referring to food physical and three other kinds of food. Lord Buddha dwells at length on the four kinds of food. He explains how, just as physical hunger is behind the compulsion to eat food for the body, so hunger of another kind than biological is behind the urge for experience. This, in Buddhist terminology, is *tanhā,* hunger for embodied existence, usually translated as craving. This craving or desire is the common factor behind all types of nourishment.

Yet another common factor is digestion. Whatever kind of food is taken in, whether bodily, psychic, or mental, has to be digested, and the process of digestion implies a separation between that which can be retained and that which must be rejected. After digestion follows assimilation when that which has been retained becomes part and parcel of oneself, or rather of that aspect of oneself which consumed the food. In this constant process of taking in and of rejecting or discarding, should one retain what should have been thrown out, one causes injury to whatever principle is involved. This is true of the body and many ailments owe their origin to the retention of food which should have been rejected. It is also true of the emotional nature and of the mind. These get clogged up and toxic through the retention of selfish desires and ugly thoughts. With the mind the bad food may in turn consume the mind itself, resulting in peculiar psychological abnormalities and aberrations, and leading to obsession.

Strange it is that, while no sane person would deliberately give the body food which is poisonous or rotten, the same care is not taken with the desire nature or the mind! Much which is positively harmful is given both to the emotional and to the mental sheaths. In the Buddhist canon we find a large number of texts on this subject. The craving for sensuous and emotional experience is frequently equated with *dukkha* or sorrow. In Pāli the words for nutriment and clinging, *āhāra* (nutriment) and *upādāna* (clinging), are both derived from taking up or seizing. They were used to signify the fuel consumed by a fire, or the oil given to a lamp.

Desire, then, separative or selfish desire, is the cause of all suffering. Even the craving for mental satisfaction results in pain. In the *Dhammapada* one full chapter is on Craving, *Tanhā.* In it men driven by craving are compared to a hunted hare running round and round. Since the cause of all misery is craving, extinction of craving is the end of pain. The desires which arise from craving are enumerated: desire for riches, for pos-

sessions, lust, ill-will, delusion. All these must be eliminated.

In other texts we are given a masterly analysis of both the cause and the cure of sorrow. Lord Buddha was a healer of men's minds and hearts, and taught in detail the practical means whereby man can purge himself of all egotism, pride, and arrogance and overcome the dire heresy of separateness. So long as he lives for himself alone, so long must he experience pain and sorrow. This is what is meant in *Light on the Path,* where we are asked to desire possessions above all; but

> those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true self.

May we become pure enough to live and labour for that united Spirit of Life which is our true Self, the Self of all creatures!

NAMRATĀ

EVERY MAN is unique, and his uniqueness is given to him so that he may unfold it and make it flower. No-one ever lived who was the same as he; for had there ever been one who was the same as he there would have been no reason for him to exist. Each person is a new thing in the world, and he should bring to perfection what makes him unique.

But just as a man requires the everyday world to perform his actions in, so his uniqueness is unfolded by his way of living with others: and the more truly unique he is, the more he can give to those others. For the unique is not the Whole, but a part of the Whole: and the purer a man is and the more perfect, the more intensely is he aware of but being a part, of but having a place in the great community of his fellow human-beings. This is humility. To feel the universe as a sea, and oneself as a wave in it — this is humility.

—MARTIN BUBER

DONALD H. BISHOP

First Impressions of the *Bhagavad-Gita*

[We are glad to welcome to our pages Dr. Donald H. Bishop, B.SC., B.D., PH.D. Dr. Bishop is at present Associate Professor of Philosophy at Washington State University, U.S.A., and concerned mainly with teaching Oriental Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. He has studied more than one Eastern culture and civilization under various Fellowships in the last few years. It is of great interest to consider how the *Bhagavad-Gītā* strikes a Western mind of such deep and wide cultivation on first acquaintance. Dr. Bishop concentrates upon the philosophy of non-attachment.—ED.]

THERE ARE several themes in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* which strike a Westerner when reading it the first time. Perhaps the most outstanding is the philosophy of non-attachment. This is due in part to his background and conditioning. The Westerner has been brought up in a culture which is extremely materialistically oriented. Communications media constantly uphold material abundance as the chief goal or end of life. A person's worth is determined by how much he has accumulated. Happiness is believed to be proportionate to the number of things one has. It is not to be wondered at that the compulsion to acquire and possess, culminating in an absolutistic "I and mine" attitude, predominates.

Several intellectual premises which have tended to dominate the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries support that outlook. The acceptance of Darwinism has led to a biological view of man which sees him as an animal, even if of the highest order, who is concerned primarily with satisfying his physical needs. Behaviouristic psychology has upheld a view of man as simply a mechanical, stimulus-response organism. This has been buttressed by a sociological stance permeated by environmentalism which restricts man's activity to interaction with his physical environment. Dominating the field of ethics is utilitarianism centred upon the pains-pleasures, rewards-punishment thesis. The good is that which enables one to avoid pain and gratify pleasure. Man will act virtuously only under necessity, if he will be rewarded, or if he can see something in it for himself. Conditioned thus, it is not to be wondered at that a Westerner is quite taken aback by a reading of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. This is especially true of its philosophy of non-attachment, which is reflected in the following verses:

> For no one ever, even for a moment remains without doing action. Everyone is made to do action through the constituents of nature.
>
> Do thy prescribed action. Action is more excellent than non-action.

Even the maintenance of thy body would not be achieved if thou didst not act.

Thy business should be with action, never with the fruits; let not thy motive be the fruit of action, nor be attached to non-action. Therefore without attachment ever perform action that should be done, for by doing action without attachment a man attains the supreme.

If a man meditates on the objects of sense, attachment to them arises; from attachment desire is born; from desire anger is produced.

Through anger comes bewilderment, through bewilderment wandering of memory, through confusion of memory destruction of the intellect, through destruction of the intellect he is destroyed.

But he who with obedient self goes among the objects of sense with his senses detached from passion and aversion, and under the control of the self, attains to serenity.

The man who forsakes all desires, and moves without longing, without the thought of mine, or I, attains to peace.

When he has abandoned attachment to the fruit of actions, ever contented and without support, even though he is occupied in action, he performs none.

Without hope, with his mind and self restrained, abandoning all possessions, doing merely that action required by the body, he acquires no guilt.

He whose every undertaking is without desire or purpose, and whose work is burnt up with the fire of knowledge, is called learned by the wise.

He who is trained in Yoga, with the self purified, the self subdued, and the senses overcome, and whose self has become the self of all beings, even though he act is not stained.

Even in this world rebirth is overcome by those whose mind stays in equanimity.

Many there are who, freed from passion, fear and anger, becoming one with me, depending on me, and purified with the austerity of knowledge, have entered into my being.

In the way that men approach me, even so do I impart myself to them; it is my path that they follow from all directions.

For the wise who are trained in intellect renounce the fruit produced by action; they are released from the bonds of birth, and go to the abode free from sickness.

When he who has renounced all purposes is not attached to objects of sense or to actions, he is said to have reached the summit of Yoga.

To those who are detached from desire and anger, who practise restraint, who are restrained in mind, and who know the self, the nirvana of Brahma is near.

He who is happy within, who rejoices within, who also has light within, he attains the nirvana of Brahma.

The philosophy of non-attachment is grounded in several presuppositions. One is that life demands work. Action is unavoidable. The problem is, then, What kind of actions should be performed and to what end or purpose? The *Bhagavad-Gītā* gives at least four answers. One should do only that kind of work which is pleasing to *Brahman*. Also, a person should perform only those actions which will lead him to *Brahman*. In the third place, one should undertake only that work which results in unity between men. Finally, a man should perform only those actions which give him inner peace.

What are the results when we apply these criteria to a materialistically oriented culture, one in which men's motives for actions, to use the *Bhagavad-Gītā*'s terms, are "the fruits of one's actions"? We see, for one thing, that men in it do not have inner serenity. Instead they are victims of their cravings. They are filled with anxiety and fear; anxious about whether what they do will give the wanted results and, once the results in the form of things have been secured, fearful that others will be envious and attempt to take them away. The result is that the second and third criteria are not met either, for in such a situation barriers are erected between men. Instead of unity there is disunity, conflict, and strife. Such a condition is surely not pleasing to *Brahman*; nor is it conducive to leading men to *Brahman*. *Brahman* is not pleased with man's force, violence, and unchecked expression of passions; and, when men are overwhelmed by their cravings and desires, their minds and wills are void of the spiritual and are not set on *Brahman*.

This judgement is an inference also from the second presupposition of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* that man's real nature is spiritual. This truth is lost sight of in a materialistic culture. Man's spiritual self remains dormant because it is not cultivated. His spiritual nature is not eliminated; it only goes unexpressed and remains in an atrophied state until some great crisis occurs and spirit breaks forth from the bonds of materialism. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* declares that man's chief end is the realization of his divine nature and potentialities. This may require one or several lives. Things may be a means to that end, if they are admitted into one's life in the right proportion. Westerners have often accused Hinduism of encouraging an attitude of indifference and fatalism towards the sufferings of this world which resulted in a lack of social and material progress. Such a charge, however, comes from a lack of knowledge of India's history and religions. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* does not condemn the senses and material things as wrong in themselves. They simply exist as a part of

reality. It stresses the working out of a balance between the material and spiritual with the scales weighted ultimately toward the latter. A person's life may be filled with material wealth; but, if his spiritual life is not nurtured, he feels restless and incomplete. The spiritual is necessary to complete the material.

That not only man but all reality is ultimately spiritual is the third presupposition of the philosophy of non-attachment. This might be stated otherwise by saying that it is grounded in an ontological, not an empirical, metaphysics. In more ordinary language we might say that being is just as important, if not more so, than doing. The wife who says to her husband that she does not always want him to be doing something for her but to simply be with her gives a practical expression to this view. In the West we attach great importance and value to activity *per se*. We feel time is wasted unless we are doing something. A person's worth is determined by what and how much he does. Not doing is associated with passivity and ridiculed. Reflecting is considered a waste of time. These attitudes are grounded basically in an empirical metaphysics which is quite contrary to an ontological one; for the latter insists that a person's value is to be determined as much by what he is as by what he does. From an ontological standpoint being is prior to doing; being is more significant than doing. Being determines doing; for what one does is determined by what one is.

The fourth presupposition of the philosophy of non-attachment concerns man's attitude toward reality. Here a qualitative judgement is made that ours should be an appreciative, not an exploitative, attitude toward nature or the natural world. Nature exists to be appreciated, not exploited. As a matter of fact this follows from the very essence of nature. Man cannot conquer nature as Western man thinks he does. It will not allow itself to be conquered. It can only be worked with. To believe otherwise is to be under *Māyā* or illusion. Man is not a master of natural processes or laws. He did not originate them; they go on independently of him. Man can only work in harmony with nature. Further, to exploit nature is to use her for one's own selfish ends, and, when we do this, we build barriers between one another. The philosophy of non-attachment requires that we be more detached so that we can be more sharing and appreciative toward all that is. Only by so doing can we be true to the essence of reality.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* presupposes also that ethical motivation must be grounded in the sense of duty and *Brahman*. It claims that it is tenuous and undesirable for an ethical act to be motivated simply by foreseeable reward, fear of pain and punishment, or by inclination. What happens

when there is no reward in sight? Will one act virtuously then? Or if there is no-one present to punish him? Will he do the right? What happens when one simply does not feel inclined to do what is accepted as virtuous? As the eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant pointed out, in each case the person is much less likely to do the right. If his motivation is a sense of duty, however, he is much more apt to do what he believes is right in those situations where he is not inclined to or is not being watched or rewarded. Undoubtedly such a thesis seems strange to men in a materialistically oriented culture; but this is because they have been conditioned to a punishment-rewards system. Men can and should act from a different motivation, according to the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Not only does it enjoin a sense of duty but it also stresses a theistic basis for ethical motivation and action. This does not imply that one should be virtuous simply to receive a reward from *Brahman,* a hasty conclusion which some may draw. It means instead that one is good because he believes the Deity wills him to be, apart from any consequences. If some good results for oneself, it is by happenstance or the law of causality, and not intention. Work and ethical action should be done only to please *Brahman* and not for the fruits or rewards. Otherwise God is being used by man as a means to his ends and this is a violation of the Divine.

Of a Westerner's first impressions of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* the one discussed here has been the philosophy of non-attachment. We have seen how it differs from the Westerner's background and intellectual orientation and noted five presuppositions it was based on. No conclusion has been drawn as to the validity of either the Western or the Eastern view. Undoubtedly each can learn from the other and by so doing reach a closer approximation to the truth.

DONALD H. BISHOP

WHAT I propose here to myself and to all who may read these papers is, to study the *Bhagavad-Gita* by the light of that spiritual lamp — be it small or great — which the Supreme Soul will feed or increase within us if we attend to its behests and diligently inquire after it. Such at least is the promise by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* — the Song Celestial.

—W. Q. JUDGE: *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*

SARALA DEVI

A New Conception of Citizenship

[Smt. Sarala Devi has dedicated herself to the Sarvodaya movement led by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. She writes with earnest feeling of the absolute need for a new, practical conception of citizenship which will replace both irresponsible individualistic self-seeking and excessive control by the State of social life. She outlines the hints found in the Sarvodaya movement and its experience for a society that would embody such an ideal of citizenship.—ED.]

THE REPUBLISHED PAMPHLET *Preparation for Citizenship* certainly makes exceedingly interesting reading in today's context; for it poses a challenge to the factors which have been the cause of such a rapid deterioration in standards of citizenship and party politics in twenty years of freedom in our country.

The deep disappointment which we all feel at the unfortunate trend of national and international relations in this period must perforce stimulate us to constructive thought as to the suitability of the pattern of formal democracy which has been accepted for India.

Man is embodied spirit, but so far we have failed to develop on a collective scale the values which we have to a large extent accepted in the individual life. The challenge before us today is to guide the direction of our scientific discoveries by spiritual values. As Gandhi said, "True economics and true politics are true spirituality," and anything in these spheres which clashes with spiritual values is bad economics and bad politics.

This then is the challenge before the world today. The rapid advance of scientific discoveries during the last century impels us to an equally rapid and revolutionary change in our theories of economic and political organization, and our conception of what good citizenship really demands. Social, economic, and political norms which may have been perfectly moral a hundred years ago may today be anti-social and therefore unspiritual.

We have before us the teaching of the ancients, and throughout the ages how many people have made sincere efforts to follow them and accept their standards in their individual lives! However, Mahatma Gandhi was perhaps the first person to attempt an application of these moral and spiritual norms to political and economic problems. It became our national duty to explore ways and means of going forward in his path, rather than blindly accept the pattern of formal Western democracy. The materialist conceptions of Western social philosophy have produced there a so-called civilization which has culminated in two world wars (and "total war" at

that — a new conception) in a quarter of a century, and now presents us with a world frantically but unsuccessfully searching for an alternative to war in the atomic age, with its possibility of universal destruction. The opposing camps of capitalism and communism, being grounded in acquisitive and violent materialistic values, both stand as a frustrated menace to the world. Communist "dialecticism" stands revealed as neither antithesis nor synthesis, but a mere reaction which owing to its materialistic nature holds out no hope of proceeding towards a synthesis, but merely towards a fresh reaction.

The acceptance by India of a Westernized constitution and the goal of a socialistic pattern of society is disappointing and contrary to the spiritual traditions of our country. Thoughtful sections in the Western world who are looking to India for guidance out of the "slough of despond" must inevitably experience disappointment at the present accepted official policy of the country, and the conditions inevitably arising from this; but they do find inspiration in Vinoba's unceasing effort of the last sixteen years towards the foundation of a new economic and political structure based on the principles of voluntary renunciation and consensus of opinion, combined with a decentralization of both political power and production. This broad-based conception is a logical corollary of our ancient Indian spiritual heritage, and holds out the possibility of counteracting the forces of private greed and personal competition which are the main factors in Western economic and political conceptions. This negatives the conception of the "economic man," which is outmoded even in modern Western psychological thought (see, for instance, *The Art of Loving*, by Erich Fromm), and opens up the hope of constructing a new society whose basis is "giving" rather than "taking." There is a practical possibility of moving forward to the concept of "universal brotherhood" by favouring the expression of the "divine spark" in every man and removing the factors which are unfavourable to it. Previous Utopias have mostly been confined to the pages of books, and consequently to a theoretical acceptance. This conception of voluntary relinquishment, both by individuals and by the community, sprang spontaneously from the very traditions of our country, and therefore does hold out a hope of fulfilment which other theoretical Utopias did not. We all appreciate Śrī-Kṛṣṇa's "thefts" of milk and butter as a childish prank, but they had a far greater significance: to teach the *gopis* (milkmaids) that their dairy products should be used to build up the health and strength of all the children of their village, not for monetary gain. This is the spiritual basis of the *grām-dān* ("village gift," resulting in a village republic or village *swarājya*) movement.

The movement also seeks a solution to the relative claims of society and individual. As a matter of fact, their interests do not clash. What is good for society is good for the individual, and what is bad for the individual is bad for society. On reading Ruskin's "Unto This Last," Gandhi translated the title not as *Antyodaya* (the uplift of the lowest) but as *Sarvodaya* (the uplift of all), because he considered it as much our inherent duty to free the rich from their attachment to worldly goods as to free the poor from their poverty. *Sarvodaya* recognizes such degrees of difference as are helpful to the smooth and happy functioning of society, not such degrees as are harmful to both the "haves" and the "have-nots" by creating a gulf between wealth and poverty. It wishes for a mean between the levelling process of Communism (which, however, they are still far from achieving in Russia) and the huge differences accepted by Western capitalism. It also seeks for a solution to the evils of unlimited individual competition on the one hand and the lack of individual initiative found in State-controlled production and agriculture on the other, thus counteracting the spirit of rivalry with others at home and war abroad as also "petty meanness, subtle conceit and corroding envy."

The experiences of adult life form a logical educational sequence, education from conception to the grave, as Gandhi suggested. This is both self-education and self-discipline. This conception of education brings us to a true conception of the real use of the *guṇas* and also of *karma*. The system of education through a productive craft correlated to the social and natural environment encourages individual creative faculties and a conception of man's place in nature, as also of the social dedication which is so essential to lead us to what Vinoba calls a "spiritual way of life," not limited to the individual, but in its social conception also. It holds out the hope of an integrated life, a synthesis between the three factors of heart, head, and hands, thus helping us to progress towards the state when the "individual can reason for himself and gain perception and conviction in all matters in life."

If we can really achieve harmonious individual growth, we can progress non-violently towards the condition where the State withers away. In the life of fully developed and integrated individuals, the need of external interference and regulation dwindles. In a truly moral society, there should be no need for a police force. Whereas in Dickens's England the death sentence could be awarded for petty stealing, thoughtful people now oppose capital punishment even for murder, and many countries have indeed abolished capital punishment. A truly spiritual organization of society would minimize the development of a "criminal" element, which is main-

ly a reaction against materialism and individualism. In a society based on spiritual values the whole concept of the duties of the State must change, with its functions becoming more and more decentralized, and resting on broad-based public sanctions rather than on centralized control. There is then no question of clash between the interests of the individual and of the State.

Unless we can urgently bring this new conception into practice in our villages, we run great risk of losing that Soul of Spirituality which responded so nobly to the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Even the worm turns at last, and the last twenty years have nearly filled the cup of misery to brimming over. Landless labourers in our villages are very rapidly becoming a ready prey to destructive Communist propaganda. So far our apparent spiritual leaders have failed to help to relieve this situation. We have not always realized the truth of Gandhiji's saying that you cannot talk spirituality to empty stomachs.

The conception of a clash between the interests of the individual and the State appears to be a mistaken conception based on material values. In a state or society organized on the basis of truly spiritual values this difference might be apparent; it could not be real. A synthesis must emerge. The principle of decentralization in all spheres would gradually lead to a decrease in the concept of nations and national sovereignty, and this to a diminution of the factors leading to international strife. In this new conception, the State is more dependent on its citizens than the citizens on the State; the individual or the sum-total of individuals is more important than the concept of the "State." We are all jointly responsible for one another and have no right to delegate that responsibility to an impersonal entity. One of the basic concepts in *grām-dān* is the use of all our gifts (intelligence, physical strength, land, capital, power of service, etc.) not for individual gain, but for the service of society, accepting as *prasād* (food of which devotees partake after it has been offered up in worship) whatever society may deem fit in return. The whole concept is a synthesis between the moral and spiritual values of individual and public life, and this is the true spiritual revolution.

It would seem to be quite urgent that we should begin thinking on really new lines, if we wish, through solving our own peculiar internal problems, to help to radiate the spiritual light for which the West is hoping.

SARALA DEVI

PETER M. SMITH

On Education

[Mr. Peter M. Smith, at the age of twenty-two, has obtained a degree in chemistry, studied for a Teaching Certificate, and turned aside from this career to study at a Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre in London, where he has begun *Brahmacārin* disciplines. He takes a radical and liberal stand on most social issues and on that basis is very sympathetic to the Beat movement's criticisms of our over-mechanized and over-economic civilization. His thoughtful liberalism is reflected in this essay on the aims of education.—ED.]

EDUCATION is a large and expanding activity. In Britain, for instance, there must be some ten million children at school; new schools are being built as fast as can be; the money invested by the government is staggering; and there is a chronic shortage of teachers. A similar concern about education is evident in most other countries — indeed, it is often held to be the panacea for the world's troubles.

Yet is this faith in education justified or valuable? Firstly, what do we mean by education?

There are two broad views as to the nature of education. One, the traditional, claims that education involves the rearing of children in accord with given values, in moulding them to the best ideal of manhood. Such was Plato's view, in his *Republic*; and it continued into the Christian tradition. The other view, now in vogue, and thus called the progressive, sees education as developing the child's own personality irrespective of extraneous ideals. Its most notable exponent is, of course, Dewey.

These two aspects are, however, not incompatible: they are both equally necessary for the best growth of a child, and need to be reconciled at appropriate periods of his development. Ideals need to be varied to suit temperaments and are only of value if the child grows into them himself; and the pragmatic approach needs some direction if it is not to be pointless. Thus, since either of these views is incomplete in itself, I wish to suggest a definition of education which seems to me to be more general and significant: *I will consider education as leading to an increase in awareness.*

Usually, this increase in awareness is effected by a teacher, a more advanced mind whose influence uncovers latent sources within the educand, or who causes the educand to seek new experiences which increase his awareness. Education so defined does not end when we leave school.

This definition is, then, I think, general enough to be acceptable to most people. And it also follows that education so defined is justified, since

neither of the two alternatives, i.e., to decrease in awareness or to remain at a constant awareness, seem as valuable as education. We may then say that education is self-justified; and in this sense it does seem to be a universal desideratum. A general increase in the awareness of men would be rather welcome; the trouble is to find the most worthy and efficient system of education.

Now one of the most significant things about the education in Britain is that it is State-centred. (The so-called independent schools would get nowhere if they did not produce State-adapted products.) The schooling of our children is quite evidently a process designed to form people more or less well-adapted to perform functions in the State. People have to earn a living; hence they must be educated for this; hence they must become cogs in the State machine. Inevitably, the result of this is that *the yardstick of successful education is social success*. There have been some recent refinements of this; it is now not enough to consider an income the measure of the Good Life, but we also assess the happiness and personal adjustment of the individual. The best possible result of current educational practice is someone who has the best possible job within his capacities and who also lives the happiest social life as well.

This is all very well, but it cannot avoid the fact that the State educates people for its own needs. The great Education Acts of 1870 and 1944 which made education, and then secondary education, free and compulsory for all were based primarily not on the recognition that people ought to be educated for their own good — but on the recognition that they would have to be educated for the good of the State, that is, for its industrial and technological prosperity. This is still the prevalent attitude behind the vast expansion of education that is going on at present.

Of course, education proper accompanied this State education; there was an increase in the awareness of the pupils, unavoidably. But this was not held to be self-justified, as it was only a by-product of the process of teaching people to read and count, and assist in the glorious Progress of Science and Humanity. True and false educational ideas were inextricably mixed up, and the confusion is still wide-spread.

Although I have said that education leads to an increase in awareness, I have not considered *of what* this awareness is, or could be. The point is important. And it is obvious that there is a vast range of topics to be aware of — far too many for the most brilliant mind; we can never know enough, and must be guided by the *value* of our subjects. However, the State system (at its best) inculcates and fosters an awareness of *social* and *economic* aims; that is, it educates a child in the physical and worldly. A child's education has to be selective, but the criteria for this selec-

tion are the needs of the State, and worldly expediency, with strong emphases on adjustment to the community; but the many other levels and depths of life are neglected. Thus even that true education which does accompany the State system is not the best, or of the highest quality. When the State sets out to deliberately indoctrinate, the results are terrifying.

Now can we not separate the true from the false education, and concentrate on the former? This is obviously the answer to the problem of how to get the best educational system.

Firstly, then, we must deprecate all education which is directed at making people primarily State-functions. Education is essentially individualistic, for it is only individuals who can be aware.

Secondly, we could try and alter the criteria which guide education at present, and move away from the amoral utilitarianism which is so common, to a more balanced teaching of the profundity of life.

Thirdly, we need to reform our society in the direction of individual freedom, that is, in the liberal tradition.

We can envisage a society composed of autonomous individuals living together for mutual aid and security, *who are social animals secondarily to their freedom*. In the future, most of the physical security will be automatic and dependent on applied science, and it will function with the minimum of human intervention. The greater society could be a federation of smaller groups of people, and democracy would then be a viable ideal within these small groups; creative competition between the groups would be a constructive outlet for human passions.

Compared to this ideal, present-day society is a mess, and there seems little hope of such an ideal ever being recognized. Instead of becoming decentralized, power concentrates in fewer and fewer hands, with a corresponding increase in the totalitarian assumptions of the government. Aided by the terrific increase in population which aggravates the pressures (if there were not so many children being born, there would be no need for so much educational boom) and the mechanics of our economy, the many liberties still recognized in Britain erode away — they are nonexistent over a large part of the world. The demands of the State become more and more presumptuous and oppressive; international relations are hardly civilized. Within society itself, the vast bulk of people are ignorant of their aims; they get lost in a wilderness of production-consumption (of mostly unnecessary rubbish); they cannot escape the rat-race. The whole social set-up is a hell of spiritual bankruptcy, the physical manifestations of this being evident to anyone who takes a train journey through the Midlands into London. This then is what our children are introduced to when the State educates them.

Yet short of founding a New Order and new schools, we must make do with what we have while trying to improve it in the light of our ideals. The present position of the balance between education for itself and education for the needs of the State might all seem to be on the side of the State. However, there are many signs that the liberal conception of education is still awake and even growing. This can be seen in the revolution in the primary schools; and even the comprehensive schools, with many faults, at least aim for fairness of opportunity. Far-sighted reports, like that of Newsom, are still produced.

However, when all is said, education will always be terribly secular and limited (producing secular, limited people) until there is wide-spread recognition of the direction being travelled. If people insist on judging a person's worth, not by the quality of his soul, but by his income and social status, then these, being held of value, will be the main concern of education.

PETER M. SMITH

Return to a Room

Empty it seemed, and yet I was aware
Of gentle hands with healing in their touch,
The hands of ministering angels,
Mist-like, my cares dissolved and I was free,
Suddenly free and filled with strange new joy,
Yet nothing to the outward eye seemed changed,
The flowers in the bowl, the table, and the chair
Stood in their rightful place,
Just as before
The half-drawn curtains flirted with the breeze ...
Whence came those emanations beautiful,
The music like soft bells,
Those healing hands,
The soft warm light too lovely for this world?

HERBERT BLUEN

ALUN LLEWELLYN

Forebears of Erigena

[Our old friend, Mr. Alun Llewellyn, has contributed several interesting articles to our pages last year on the substantial scientific and cosmological thinking to be found in the Ancient Books of Wales. This has become a special study of his and he has broken new ground in his translation of these works — parts of which were nearly contemporary with the historical figure who is the original of the legends of King Arthur. In this article he shows the link in thought between the thinkers of the Ancient Books and the well-known early medieval philosopher, Erigena. We print below the first part of his article. The second part, which is to appear next month, contains a sequence of translations from the Ancient Books.—ED.]

I

ONE of the most enigmatic figures in the history of Western philosophy, during the equally enigmatic period in which the reduction of the power of East Rome in Constantinople under Mohammedan pressure was balanced by the rise of a new Roman Empire of the West under Charlemagne, is John the Scot, known better by the name of Erigena (*c.* A.D. 800–77).

He is best remembered for his work *De Divisione Naturae*, written about A.D. 860, a treatise on the relation of things created to the Creator; a work closely allied to the doctrines of Neo-Platonism, suspect in his own day and later condemned, in A.D. 1210 and 1225, by a Latin Church ideologically besieged by the infiltration of a number of doctrines introduced into Europe by Mohammedan scholarship inspired by the science known to Ptolemy and Aristotle.

In his lifetime, Erigena enjoyed the protection of the Carolingian court in Gaul (France), where he had settled. This protection was due to his exceptional learning; for, we are told, his Gallic contemporaries were amazed that so intimate a conversance with Greek and Latin and much else could belong to a man born (as the name Erigena implies) in Ireland and educated there well into his middle life. But this astonishment would appear to be exaggerated. The chronicler Hervic of Auxerre in A.D. 876 records a steady influx of Irish philosophers into the Continent at that time. And it is notable that they are referred to in terms which suggest not simply religious learning but acquaintance with a scientific study of the Universe.

Moreover, the tradition of scholarship around the waters of the Irish Sea was already firmly established.

> At the time of the invasion of Gaul first by Attila, then by Goths, Vandals and Alaric, all the learned men on their side of the sea fled and in the countries beyond the seas, namely Ireland and wherever else they betook themselves, brought to the inhabitants of those regions an enormous advance in learning (contemporary record quoted in *Cambridge Medieval History,* III. 501).

This is a reference to the disturbances of the fifth century A.D. in the western areas of the Empire, or the Gallic Prefecture. And the recent discovery of Rome's only (so far known) ocean-going naval base in the Bristol Channel explains this exodus to securer conditions and assists considerably in throwing light on the obscure history of Britain in the Dark Ages.

Between the sixth and eighth centuries, "Latin and to a less degree Greek were studied in Ireland from a scholarly point of view" (Montgomery James, quoted by Bertrand Russell in *History of Western Philosophy,* Cap. 8).

It appears probable, then, that Erigena was by no means unique but that his training and his thinking had derived from a well-established school.

The Ancient Books of Wales (*Aneirin, Taliesin, Black Book*) from which the "Arthurian" legend was much later derived, are set by the History of Nennius in the middle of the sixth century. The extant copies made some centuries later show that they were made accurately but from originals whose language was unfamiliar in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Errors in transcription are always corrected; where alternative versions are available, they are noted; but the copyists frequently run directly from one essay into another without being aware that a new subject of discussion has arisen.

Their content is wholly devoted to the analysis of the machinery of the heavens, basically as the structure of time and the geometry of navigation (for the seas, the Ocean surrounding Earth, are for them the principal division of Nature) but also as a study of the mysterious Mind which summoned the stars from the darkness of outer space.

In this philosophy the schools of Classical thought are perpetuated; the five stages of creation, from the Night to the Firmament, the Planets, Ocean, and Land, are set in the order in which Being first shaped itself from Non-Being and from Form to Soul and then Body resolved into the mind of Man. This succession through a series of concentric spheres was a continuous inward evolution and Lucretius in his *De Rerum Natura* states the chief relationships in which they were conceived. These are three: Land and Ocean made one major unit, the Earth (*Tellus*); the

sun, moon, and other planets surrounding it with the mathematic rhythm of Time completed the World (*Mundus*) the upper limit of which touched the constellations moving in the ultimate sky of Night (*Summa Rerum*). In Classical theory, as in Hindu philosophy, the Creator, having ordered this sequence, similarly ordered its dissolution; the whole coil of Creation, having spiralled inward in the past, must, in the existing passage of time, wind back again into the cold sphere of pure Being beyond the stars, whence a fresh universe would be prepared.

Erigena's own analysis accepts the same order of thought.

Nature (he argues) takes four forms: (I) That which creates but is not itself created. This is God. (II) What is created and then creates. This is explained as the ideas which come from God. But the idea of perfect Time was expressed by the exact rotation of the constellations in the Firmament, so created by God, which created in its turn the sphere of planets. (III) What is created but creates nothing. This is the division of Space and Time, the area contained within the World of Earth and Sun. (IV) What neither creates nor is created, God again, but God in the aspect to which all things return when Creation has run its course. God, for Erigena, was a concept not to be expressed in any human word and only manifest in His several aspects; and the principle uniting the One, which was the essence of divinity, with the Many seen in its manifold aspects, was the Logos or governing Reason of the Universe.

The Ancient Books of Wales adopt a formula parallel to that of Lucretius; but, concerned as they are to establish a philosophy closely allied to practical sciences, the three major units they accept follow the astronomical charts. The *Tellus,* or Earth ringed by Ocean, is reflected in the circle of the skies whose stars never sink below the seas, and passes into the *Mundus,* or World, defined as the area between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, above which stands the Firmament of fixed stars.

First Creation they named YU, a Latinized form of the Greek word meaning "what is produced." The reverse process, the ultimate return to the abiding Night, which governs the existing Universe (Neo-Cosmos) is named UY. It is interesting to note that YU is reflected in the modern Welsh language by *yw* (what is) and UY by *wy* (I am). The principle of divinity as described in the Ancient Books, YUUY, therefore still carries much of its original meaning: "What is, I am." It is also worth noting that *wy* now means "an egg" and so still preserves the idea, expressed by the Greeks as *Oon* and *Oion,* of the Egg of Life, the symbol by which many early philosophies expressed the mystery of a Cosmos held balanced in the indefinable emptiness of outer space.

But Creation's successive series of spheres was distinguished by five

adapted forms of YU: OU (Night), UU (Firmament), AU (Planets), EU (Ocean), IU (Land). The upper hemisphere, or "heaven" of each became, respectively, DOU, DUU, DAU, DEU, DIU. The same principle produced DYU and DUY and the combined form of DYUUY, by which the idea of God in the broader aspects of Creation was expressed. But for the evident world that idea followed the sequence of the heavens. DYU was the aspect of God, uncreated but who creates; DUU the next aspect manifest in the Firmament, created and in turn creating the World; DEU, the aspect which orders the hours and degrees and the four quarters of time and space within the World; DUY, the God neither created nor creating who draws all things back again into himself. DOU is a term specifically reserved for that aspect of God which is the Logos.

DIU is used exclusively to describe the presence of God in Man and the days of Man. DAU, the heaven of the planets, does not seem, on the other hand, to have been used with any further significance than that of the astronomical area reserved for the solar system. The explanation is that the Sun and its attendant planets were seen as an extension of operation of time around Ocean; the name given them, the SEITH or Seven, takes a form identifying them with the structure of things belonging to Earth, and the roof of their heaven was, naturally, the line of the Firmament. DAU, the space of skies between Cancer and Capricorn, was simply the area of operation in which the planets swung between the DEU and the DUU. It was recognized as constituting a boundary between the outer and the inner universe, dividing the heavens into two parts; and it has survived with the meaning of "two." Where it was necessary to define the point of connection between the Planetary Sphere and the Firmament, the orbit of Saturn (SAD-URN), the most distant of planets then known, was accepted as sufficient; otherwise the Arctic Circle (ARTH-UR) round the Pole, to which the movement of the sun was bound, was used.

These concepts entirely dominate the Ancient Books and their phraseology is consistent throughout. In a sequence of verses in the *Black Book,* however, the words DYU, DUU, DEU, DUY are employed precisely in that order and with the obviously deliberate intention to convey the teaching expressed by Erigena. Certain of the poems in the *Black Book* cannot, in all probability, date before A.D. 800, though several must be earlier; it is unlikely that the philosophy they propound would have survived much later than A.D. 950.

ALUN LLEWELLYN

(To be concluded)

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

The Prose-Poems of Subramania Bharati

[Dr. Prema Nandakumar has contributed many pieces of literary criticism to our pages. In this brief article she examines the prose-poems of Subramania Bharati, a poet who was to Tamil literature rather what Tagore was to Bengali.—ED.]

TANOR BAYBARS, a young poet from Turkey, speaks about two kinds of imitation by the struggling poet:

> Imitation of technique and imitation of the spirit. If you are imitating a technique, then perhaps it's a good thing, because, after all, you learn a great deal from other people's techniques. But to start imitating their spiritual entities would be a very harmful thing indeed.

The truth of this is apparent in all great poets who have taken the best out of traditions and moulded the old techniques into new forms by pouring their spirit's matter into them. Those who committed the blunder of imitating the spirit have condemned themselves to the limbo of poetic failure. Rabindranath Tagore could be described as the first poet in prose of modern India. There is a vague kinship between his prose-poems and our Vedic hymns, though this kinship must not be overstressed. Actually, Tagore was well-trained in the traditional verse forms. But a time came when he outgrew these limitations. K. Chandrasekharan, detailing this phase in Tagore's poetic life, quotes the Nobel Laureate himself:

> My songs have put off their adornments.
> They have no more desire for dress and decoration.
> They mar our union;
> They come between Thee and me;
> Their jingle drowns thy whispers.

He started perfecting a new technique in verse. He had many predecessors in this, the most famous being Walt Whitman. In India this technique was avidly taken up by many imitators, all of whom failed to capture the imaginative attention of the discerning public. Only one poet succeeded in taking this new technique to glorious heights. That was Subramania Bharati of Tamil Nad.

It would be rash to conclude that Bharati was influenced by Tagore to experiment in this medium. He had already achieved considerable fame as a poet in Tamil Nad by the time Tagore became known to the world at large. Besides, his friendship with Śrī-Aurobindo brought him into close contact with the hymns of the Vedic Seers. Like the Seers he became completely absorbed by the splendorous Nature in and around Pondicherry, where

he was spending his self-exile. All the same, it should be remembered that the award of the Nobel Prize to Tagore in 1913 coincided with the most fruitful period in Bharati's poetic life. In Pondicherry he was undergoing a period of acute financial poverty and political persecution. In 1910 the magazines that he had edited were forcibly closed down by the British. He had nothing to do, nor anybody to publish the results of his inventive genius. All that he could do was to forget the existing troubles by working hard at his creative writing. In 1912 he wrote at a feverish pace and produced his great books, viz., *Bhagavad-Gita in Translation, Kannan Pattu, Kuyil Pattu,* and *Panchali Sapatham.* Thus Bharati tried translation, lyrics, descriptive poems, and even an epyllion within a short time. What new branch could he get hold of now? After the heavy work of 1912 and 1913 he must have taken his ease with the prose-poems, composing by fits and starts. The immediate prompting might have come through Tagore's achievement. Indeed, it is recorded in the accounts of his life that once he seriously considered challenging Tagore to a poetry contest. He seems to have admired Tagore a great deal, and has translated some of his stories into sensitive Tamil. However, it is characteristic of Bharati to be struck only by the new technique and not by what was inside Tagore's *Gitanjali.* In Bharati's prose-poems we enter a completely free world. Bharati is a stormy lord of passions, whereas Tagore prefers to be a gentle supplicant. Tagore's is a constant attempt to bridge the gulfs between "I" and "You"; it is as though his life's activities mean only one thing — the burning away of the dross within.

> Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.
>
> I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.
>
> I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart.
>
> And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions, knowing it is thy power gives me strength to act.

The Tagorean ethic seems to imply that "our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." Sorrow and pain are a necessary prelude to the Tagorean vision of love and immortality.

> It is the pang of separation that spreads throughout the world and gives birth to shapes innumerable in the infinite sky.
>
> It is this sorrow of separation that gazes in silence all night from star to star and becomes lyric among rustling leaves in rainy darkness of July.

It is this overspreading pain that deepens into loves and desires, into sufferings and joys in human homes; and this it is that ever melts and flows in songs through my poet's heart.

Bharati approaches the problem of "I" and "You" by emphasizing the feelings of joy and pleasure. He stands on the heights and communes with Nature on an equal footing. He roams electrically free amidst Nature and bestows praise on Nature even as the Vedic Seers did. Unlike the sadness and pain that are Tagore's companions, a supreme joy, a divine contentment blesses us even in the opening group of the prose-poems, titled "A Scene":

> The world is charged with sweetness.
> The sky is sweetly fashioned.
> The air is sweet.
> Fire, water, earth,
> All is sweet.
> The sun is beneficent, the moon is beneficent.
> The stars in the sky are wondrous, beautiful.
> Sweet is rain, lightning, thunder.
> Sweet is ocean, mountain, forest.
> Rivers are joy-giving.
> Ore, tree, plant, creeper,
> Flower, fruit,
> All give joy.
> Bird, insect, animal,
> All, all good creatures are.
> Fishes and the denizens of the deep are good.
> Men are very good too.
> Male and female are alike good.
> Childhood is blessed.
> Sweet is youth, and age is sweet.
> Welcome life, and welcome, death!

Just as the poet breathes in this sweetness, he also wishes the same for all the living creatures.

> May all lives be happy.
> May all bodies be rid of disease.
> View all feelings as one.
> Hail Self.
> The Nectar be ever sweet.

This is poetry because it instils poetry into the listener's heart by a twin action: the cadences of simple musical prose and the ingrained idea of universal joy. Like the Vedic *Ṛṣis*, Subramania Bharati chants the praises of the various godheads and makes a divine harmony between

gods and men. The Sun, Dawn, Light, Fire, Rain — there is an impressive poetic inspiration never before equalled in Tamil nature poetry.

> Praise we the lightning.
> May it illumine our mental horizons.
> The cloud children throw down lightning blossoms.
> There is no place without electricity.
> Even so are the Gods.
> In black silicon, white sand, green leaf,
> Red flower, blue cloud,
> In wind, in sea — electric power lies dormant everywhere.
> Hail lightning!

The second group, "*Śakti*," goes a step further. Beyonding the various godheads, Bharati perceives the essence of things in *Śakti*, the Power Creatrix, who pervades the world as ether. The third group of prose-poems entitled "Wind" is a veritable *tour de force* in prose-poems. The group begins on a humorous note, but suddenly Bharati's language acquires a stormy rhythm. After a bout of destruction the wind falls steadily. The sea storm becomes a sandy desert storm and finally quietens into a gentle breeze that fans us on idyllic evenings. The Vedic chant, *Namaste Vāyo, tvameva pratyakṣam Brahmāsi*, recurs as a bass to the music of Bharati's prose. The fourth group, "Ocean," is short, and gathers into a knot the Sea, the Wind, and *Śakti* as powers to be gazed at and worshipped in their eternal majesty.

In these four groups of lyrics we are hand in hand with the Vedic Seers and are children of Nature full of wonderment and joy. The final group affords a dramatic conclusion to the dance of the earlier lyrics. There are playlets with birds, snakes, and gods as characters. The two men who appear in this "earth-scene" are autobiographical figures. They are shown as soliloquizing on the sea-beach with a bright moon above. The picture had its original in Bharati himself, who spent most of his ten years at Pondicherry roaming the beach and composing his poems. Therefore, what Devadatta and Vasupati say reflects Bharati's own philosophy. Devadatta, for example:

> Sweet is moonlight.
> Sweet is the blue sky.
> The sounds of the Southern Seas
> Make sweet notes.
> The world is good.
> God is a Being of light.
> Knowledge is God.
> Its base is Freedom.
> I am free. I have defeated the Dark Ones.

I am God. God is me.
By love I have attained Immortality.

This affirmation is in keeping with the spirit of the prose-poems. They are pervaded with an innocent joy that is untainted by any doubt or sorrow. The Dutch poet Joost van den Vondel sings of

The children's law obeyed,
Rolling and snatching, on the leaping ivory bone,
The knuckles from the stone
And lived the life enchanted,
By gold nor chattels haunted ...[1]

Friends of Bharati have written about the childlike innocence of the poet, and how he could never harbour any rancour or bitterness in his heart. In spite of the lashes of fortune, he lived such an enchanted life in his imaginative world. That life was recorded in an unhampered, spontaneous, and mellifluous manner in his prose-poems, by now an unforgettable part of Tamil literature.

PREMA NANDAKUMAR

So Far Away

I'm restless today, and I long for the sea,
With the green billows ending in sparkle and spray..
It's no use pretending streets satisfy me,
When the South wind is sending the scent of the sea.

I'm restless today, and I long for the heat
Of the sun on the clover, the smell of the hay,
The cry of the plover, green grass at my feet ...
But the Summer dies over the dust in the street.

I'm restless today, and now I know why.
The home of the Spirit seems so far away.
The home of the Spirit is calling, and I
Can only by merit, return there to stay.

MARGO LAIRD

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[1] Translated by JAMES BROCKWAY.

K. E. PARTHASARATHY

Civilization and Vedanta

[Shri K. E. Parthasarathy is a devoted student of religious traditions and especially of the Vedānta philosophy. In this article he suggests that the present moral and spiritual needs of our civilization might be met exactly by the essential ideas of the Vedānta. Certainly we need to give primacy to the spiritual and to develop a code which will train men to serve the public good without coercion from a public authority; in short we need men of self-command and brotherly love; and such is the ideal man of the Vedānta.—ED.]

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS came into existence in different parts of the world almost at about the same time. Professor A. J. Toynbee enumerates over thirty civilizations of various periods, most of which have ceased to exist. India represents one of the oldest.

Different civilizations have been imbued with different ideas and objectives. Concepts of civilization among great thinkers, historians, and philosophers, ancient and modern, also differ widely. To cite only a few instances among modern thinkers: C. E. M. Joad considers that civilization means making and liking beautiful things, thinking freely and living rightly, and maintaining justice equally between man and man; the late Sir Winston Churchill considered that it means a society in whose soil grow freedom, comfort, and culture; Mahatma Gandhi considered that the true test of a civilization was not the provision of increased comforts and conveniences or the enjoyment of material joys and pleasures and that a civilization preoccupied with them must be characterized as "irreligion," as it takes into account neither morality nor religion and will not survive long. Pleading for a spiritual reorientation of civilization, Professor Toynbee writes:

> The time has come for us, in our turn, to wrench ourselves out of the seventeenth-century mathematico-physical line of approach which we are still following, and make a fresh start from the spiritual side. This is now, once again, the more promising approach of the two, if we are right in expecting that, in the atomic age which opened in A.D. 1945, the spiritual field of activity, and not the physical one, is going to be the domain of freedom.

Evolution is not merely the development of matter into more and more highly organized form. Such an organization exists for the purpose of the Spirit. Life must be so organized that it may become more and more a perfect vehicle of the spirit. True civilization is a process which has the same end. It may and does produce material benefit, but this is

not an end in itself. When rightly employed, it is a means whereby mental and spiritual values are given freer play because citizens are released from mundane cares. Nearly two thousand years ago, Lord Jesus asked: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

An individual and society act and react upon each other. It is the life of the individual that can truly effect any reform in society. The test of any system, religious, political, educational, or social, is the individual it produces. An individual who develops his physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual nature in harmonious proportions is an asset not only to his society but to the world at large. A society must correspondingly attain a well-balanced and all-round development.

History discloses many an ancient civilization collapsing. A critical analysis will show clearly that the fall is due to the fact that the head and heart of a society did not complement each other and play their part; that too much emphasis was laid upon material progress and prosperity, and proper ideals and ideas were lost sight of in the development. Civilizations that sharpen sensuous pleasures and desires and pander to their satisfaction have proved to be houses built on sand. Discerning and sympathetic thinkers were aware of this disturbing feature of civilization.

There is so much intellectual, emotional, and physical traffic between the different parts of the world today that it is no longer possible for man anywhere to remain in isolation. At no time in the history of humanity has the need been so keenly felt as today for a co-ordination of culture and civilization, and for a mutual understanding, between the different nations of the world. It is incumbent on everyone to bring out that which is noble and good in him not only for his individual progress but also for the sake of the world at large. The time is past for anyone to think separately for separate and small interests — individual interests against the good of the nation; national interests against the good of all nations.

One of the outstanding features of our modern civilization is the intellectualism brought about by science. Science has disclosed the infinite possibilities of intellectual enlightenment and of man's power of controlling nature and of compelling her to minister to his ever-increasing wants. It can be said without fear of contradiction that a scientific civilization has come to stay.

Science, however, has not only brought incalculable gains for humanity, but has also brought in its wake endless misery. It has become the handmaid of war machines. Great scientists and thinkers have themselves been forced to feel that though science can produce the best and most beneficial results, it must be kept in its place and not allowed to usurp the

place of the human spirit. The fullest use of science may be made, provided its limitations are not lost sight of. Science is a good servant but a bad master. Professor A. V. Hill, the distinguished British scientist, has observed:

> To imagine that scientific and technical progress alone can solve all problems that beset mankind is to believe in magic, and magic of the unattractive kind that denies a place to the human spirit.

For all the successes of science, the inner consciousness in man remains *terra incognita*. The tendency is increasing every day to focus attention on phenomenal things, sensuous perceptions; and few find either time or inclination for introspection. This accounts for much nervous tension, emotional disequilibrium, lack of *śānti* (peace) and freedom — to put it in a nutshell, absence of real happiness and wisdom. Modern civilization attracts man to a path leading to a freedom *of* the senses, when a discipline leading to a freedom *from* the senses is called for.

From times immemorial, the position of India has been peculiar. Different races have met and fraternized on her soil, and been absorbed. She has triumphed over natural calamities, invasions, and human misrule. Her history has been one of reconciliation and development and of unity and synthesis. Her civilization has been concerned with the soul rather than with matter, and with an eternal spiritual life rather than with a temporal existence. She has constantly upheld the idea that spirituality is the bedrock on which alone a stable civilization can be based. She has held that human excellence consists in the manifestation of the divine. The discipline which led to the adoption of this attitude is Vedānta.

Vedānta, based on the *prasthānatraya* of the Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* and the *Brahma-Sūtras,* expresses the eternal core of all religions. It upholds practically the dignity of the spirit. It embraces the entire cosmos and tries to solve its riddle. It implies the raising of the material, mental, moral and spiritual standards of the people till each individual is fit for the attainment of the ultimate goal. It has taken deep root not only in India, but also in foreign countries. In the words of Max Müller, "the oldest name of the oldest system of philosophy in India is Vedānta."

It is the foundation of the spiritual culture of India. It has kept society alive for the past thousands of years. In its various phases, it represents the progressive thought of man. It proclaims truths which are based on reason and profound wisdom. It is considered a very important factor in both science and civilization. It has been aptly remarked:

> Just as Vedānta appears to have anticipated Science and prepared the ground for meeting the contradictions that were to appear between science

and religion, so also the code of conduct and the spiritual values that were developed on the basis of Vedāntic philosophy seem to have fully anticipated the socio-economic problems that civilization has had subsequently to face.

Vedāntic philosophy is not the outcome only of the meditations of seers in the forest. Important parts of it were well thought out and expressed by brains which were the busiest in the affairs of the world. With the background of Vedānta, India has more lessons to impart than she has to learn in this regard. Progress in her civilization means the lifting up of the civilizations of the world to a higher level. Being spiritually minded, she cannot raise up herself alone. She must rise up with other nations so that all become more spiritual, nobler, and greater.

The ultimate principle of Vedānta is not matter but *Brahman,* the *fons et origo* of consciousness. It is existence, knowledge, and Truth. It is *jyotis* or light because it illumines the universe and removes the darkness of ignorance. The quest for the Supreme Self need not be carried on anywhere except in the sacred sanctum of one's own personality (*hṛdayam*). It is the *summum bonum,* the beginning and the end, the motive and the goal, of the world process. Manu, the great lawgiver, lays down in his *Dharma Śāstra* that he who knows this Self deserves to be a king or holder of positions of power or responsibility, and that all problems, political, social, economic, have to be solved in the light of the science of the Self. One who realizes the Self can have no *śoka* or sorrow. "He who realizes the Self sees God in all beings. He loves all beings because the Self abides in them."

Vedānta stands for four main principles: viz., the divinity of the soul; the unity of existence; the oneness of God; and the harmony of all religions. They are as important today as they were to the Vedic seers thousands of years ago. The material world has but a contingent existence and it exists in and through *Brahman.* This idea is graphically expressed in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* thus:

> As the spider produces the thread and absorbs it into itself again, as herbs grow on earth, as hairs come out spontaneously from man, so does creation spring forth from *Brahman*" (I. i. 7).

Man has a dual existence in him — one that ties him to the experiences of ordinary life and the other that takes him beyond it. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* says figuratively that two birds are sitting on the branches of the same tree; that one of them eats the fruit of the tree, while the other does not taste them at all. The biological self plunges into the experiences of ordinary life, while the spiritual Self remains unaffected. This dualism raises the problem of harmony. Man has a will of

his own by which he can make or mar himself. The *Bhagavad-Gītā* exhorts everyone in these words:

> A man should uplift himself by his own self. Let him not weaken this self. For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself. (VI. 5-6)

Man's salvation consists in his exercising his reason and will in the right direction, subordinating in himself the lower values of matter, life, and intellect to the higher values of spirit and thus steadily growing into the Divine being.

The perfect man is a combination of the head and the heart. It is the heart portion that reveals itself in religion and philosophy and the head portion that takes shape as outer civilization. As in the individual the heart and the head mutually correct and develop each other, so in so society also moral and material advance, faith and science, must combine and guide each other. Perfect knowledge is all love and perfect love is all knowledge.

Every soul is potentially divine, as everyone has in him the infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss (*Sat-Cit-Ananda*). The realization of this oneness leads to love and sympathy, which is the basis of all ethics and morality. Love is a precious balm — a sovereign cure for the wound of selfishness. It polishes one's heart, baptizes one's understanding, and purifies one's soul. The golden rule "Love thy neighbour as thyself" has its basis in the truth celebrated in the Vedāntic aphorism, "*Tat twam asi*" — Thou art That. A true civilization must recognize God as its beginning and as its end, organizing men in society through material and mental means with a view to the manifestation of the Spirit. Vedānta says: "*dwitīyad vai bhayam bhavati*" — "from the notion of separateness arises fear."

Fear, pain, and sorrow — these fetters are due to *avidyā* or ignorance. Lord Buddha laid great stress on this *avidyā* as the root of all human misery. Viewed from another point of view, *avidyā* is the notion of separateness. The more a person or a society advances in civilization, the greater will be the mutual restrictions. This will not interfere with one's inner freedom. In fact the highest freedom is the freedom to surrender one's own freedom.

The real seat and centre of happiness is the Self. In the *Ānandavallī* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, the calculus of happiness is made to culminate in *Brahman*-Bliss, which is declared to be unexcellable. Vedānta has made out a sharp contrast between pleasures derived from sensible objects and happiness. Pleasure is the child of ignorance and illusion, and happiness is all knowledge. Pleasure is selfish and happiness is all-love. Pleasure is

derived from external things; happiness is beyond the body and the mind.

In Vedānta, the end of existence is wisdom, the true knowledge, which is itself the "end of all [other] knowledge"; for "when we know Him, all the world is known." A Vedāntin is one who has grasped the essence of *Sat*. He is the real *tattvadarśin* (perceiver of the principles of things). A Vedāntin can be a useful member of a civilized society. An ideal example is furnished by King Janaka, who fought battles, improved commerce and industry, and did not disdain the plough, and was an instructor of sages in Vedāntic wisdom.

Vedānta begins with great pessimism and ends with real optimism. Swami Vivekananda has observed: "It is pessimistic so far as it negates the world of the senses but it is optimistic in its assertion of the real world." It recognizes the grand and universal law of evolution. Man is its study, man who develops from the brute into unity with God. It takes hold of him from his earliest starting point and unfolds to him his fullest possibilities.

It can therefore be seen that the ideals on which a stable civilization could be based coincide with those adumbrated by Vedānta. The relation between Civilization and Vedānta may be considered to be that of *prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* or body and Soul. Vedānta contemplates a civilized society, where toleration, love, sympathy, and kindness to all prevail; where the fleeting concerns of life are subordinated to the eternal; where man strives not to externalize but to internalize himself more and more, and the whole organism moves with a sure instinct towards *Brahman*. It also inculcates that real benefit can come only from persons who strive to *be* good rather than to *do* good; for from their assimilated goodness emanates social and spiritual advancement. Let me conclude in the words of Sir John Steward Wallace in an article in *The Hibbert Journal*:

> Men are crying out for a new vision and a profounder understanding of God. Many pray that new vision may be given by that mighty at-one-ment of science, philosophy, and religion for which the greatest thinkers of our times are calling. Among these great thinkers Indian minds are pre-eminent. In achieving this at-one-ment, Vedānta has a contribution to make. It is already perhaps the most noteworthy synthesis of thought to be found in the world.

K. E. PARTHASARATHY

New Books and Old

A Tribute to Interpreters*

[We are glad of the occasion this book furnishes to remember gratefully the life and work of Sister Nivedita, whose birth centenary fell last year. Our esteemed reviewer speaks well of the work of both Sister Nivedita and the late Dr. Coomaraswamy, and of the importance of myths.—ED.]

THIS valuable work, originally published in 1913, was long out of print. This Dover edition, which has just been brought out, is an unabridged republication, with the difference that the illustrations in the book which had appeared in colour in the original are here reproduced in black-and-white halftones. As rightly claimed by the publishers:

> Gathered together in this single volume are the most important stories of Indian mythology, taken mainly from the two great national epics, with additional tales from the Puranas and Vedas and from assorted narratives of Krishna, Buddha and Shiva. The stories range from the initial stages of mythology, when man viewed everything in the universe anthropomorphically, to the final stages when mythology reached its maturity.

The familiarity of these stories, at least to Indian readers, makes it superfluous to make any reference to their contents here. But the occasion may be taken to pay our tribute to the memory of the distinguished authors, both of whom are now no more, and about whom our younger generation seem to know very little. Sister Nivedita was an English lady (Margaret E. Noble) who became an ardent disciple of Swami Vivekananda. In the words of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy,

> she brought to the study of Indian life and literature a sound knowledge of Western educational and social science, and an unsurpassed devotion to the peoples and ideals of her adopted country.

Among her works are *The Web of Indian Life,* almost the only fair account of Hindu society written in English, and *Kali the Mother,* where for the first time the profound tenderness and terror of the Indian Mother-cult are presented in such a manner as to reveal its true religious and social significance, not merely to foreign readers, but to sophisticated Indians themselves. The present work had in the first instance been entrusted to her. But she died in 1911 when she had barely completed about a third of it. The rest was finished by Dr. Coomaraswamy.

As for Dr. Coomaraswamy himself, he was the son of a distinguished Ceylonese father and an English mother. After a scientific education, he found his true vocation as an interpreter of Eastern art and philosophy, to which he brought a rare insight and devoted his entire life. Latterly he settled down in the United States, and was the Curator of the Museum of Fine Arts at Boston (Mass.) and was mainly responsible for its great Far Eastern collection. He had married a Spanish lady, and died in 1941 at the age of seventy. He was one of those great "bridge intellects" who have helped to span the yawning gulf between East and West. Dr. Goetz said of him: "In a world dominated by the Greek ideal of beauty, he raised the banner of Indian art with far better arguments than others." At his death the Rev. John Haynes Holmes wrote about him, "Seldom has one man done so much, in so many different ways for his own people and for mankind."

I cannot resist the temptation to cite

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* *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists.* By ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY and SISTER NIVEDITA. (Dover Publications, New York. 400 pp. 1967. $2.50)

here what Eric Gill, the well-known English artist, has said about Dr. Coomaraswamy in his autobiography:

> Others have written the truth about life and religion and man's work. Others have written good clear English. Others have had the gift of witty exposition. Others have understood the metaphysics of Christianity, and others have understood the metaphysics of Hinduism and Buddhism. Others have understood the true significance of erotic drawings and sculptures. Others have seen the relationships of the true and the good and the beautiful. Others have had apparently unlimited learning. Others have loved; others have been kind and generous. But I know of no one else in whom all these powers have been combined. ... I can only say that I believe that no other living writer has written the truth in matters of art and life and religion and piety with such wisdom and understanding.

This is indeed high praise, but is by no means exaggerated.

Over fifty years ago, when the book first appeared, Dr. Coomaraswamy expressed the hope that Sister Nivedita's books would serve not merely as interpreters of India to Westerners,

> but even more, the inspiration of a new race of Indian students, no longer anxious to be Anglicized, but convinced that all real progress, as distinct from mere political controversy, must be based on national ideals, upon intentions already expressed in religion and art.

This would well apply to the present work also. But can we say sincerely that India today is moved by such ideals?

And yet, one of the most important happenings in the course of recent thought has been the reinstatement of the myth as a "value structure." to use Rickert's significant phrase. The denigration of myth as a primitive mode of thought which started with Auguste Comte in the nineteenth century and reached its heights in the writings of Tylor and Frazer is now being recognized as a total misunderstanding. Philosophy, psychology, and orthodox science are exhibiting converging trends towards a healthier appreciation of myths. An eminent scientist has said:

> Truth and myth, "these polar aspects of modern consciousness of truth," complement rather than oppose each other.

Another writes:

> The newer interpretation of science demands the rejection of the historical link between myth and falsehood. It recognizes the tension between truth and myth, and the limitations of scientific truth. The modern emphasis on ultra-rational commitments to pragmatic goals and values also has its roots in the mythical realm. Adherence to the "Myth of Reason" deeply coloured by scientism as an implicit ethic has contributed to the present-day rift between science and humanism. Helmut Schoeck points to a tendency to exaggerate the incompatibility between myth and truth. "Many scientists are essentially unaware of the fact of personal commitment, often living by a 'myth of impersonal objectivity.' "

We may conclude on a more positive note. A writer of great insight, himself a mathematician, has said:

> The saner and greater mythologies are not fancies; they are the utterances of the whole soul of man, and as such, inexhaustible to meditation. They are no amusement or diversion to be sought as a relaxation and an escape from the hard realities of life. They are those hard realities in projection, their symbolic recognition, co-ordination and acceptance. Through such mythologies our will is collected, our powers unified, our growth controlled. Through them the infinitely divergent strayings of our being are brought into balance or reconciliation.

K. GURU DUTT

Shintô: At the Fountain-Head of Japan. By JEAN HERBERT. With a Preface by MARQUIS YUKITADA SASAKI. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 622 pp. Illustrated. 1967. 70*s*.)

Monumental, yet delicate in detail, is this exhaustive survey, the first of its kind in the West. Professor Herbert, of Geneva, has devoted years to its creation, largely in Japan itself, with a for-

midable range of friends, critics, and referents, which speaks for his learning and charm. Close criticism — or even description — is impossible in a short space; but I would stress that this book will long remain a definitive study which should reveal Shintô, too often ignored or maligned, in new lights. If its encyclopaedic detailing of reference is for the experts, the author lucidly conveys the main lines of his thought in terms engrossing to any sincere student. Mental adjustment, e.g., to the concept of Kami or to the long-limbed Japanese names, will soon come and the effort will prove beneficial.

"Shintô has no creed, no dogma ... the worshipper is much more deeply affected by the trees around the temple or by the small lake near it than by any theory" (p. 33); it is an "empirical idealism" of immediate experience and aesthetic sensibility, of *naka-ima*, the "middle-now," the "eternal present" (p. 32). Professor Herbert modestly quotes (pp. 229–31) several Japanese critiques of his too "abstract, rationalistic" approach. Yet how else explain to either Westerners or non-Japanese Asians the profound concepts of *makoto* and *wa* (pp. 72–73), the active-passive dialectic of *musubi*, symbolized in the Shintô emblem (pp. 67–68), or the basic worship of *Kami*? This last term is untranslatable (pp. 23 ff.), even as "deity" or "deification of life-force which pervades all beings, animate and inanimate." Indeed, in its doctrine and cult of the "8 (or 80) hundred myriads of *Kami*" Shintô evinces a scholasticism of minutiae, confusions, and semi-historical detail (as well as imaginative power) which at least equal anything in the despised worlds of "dogma." Correct ritual, too, is all-pervasive; priests are "not spiritual leaders" (p. 132).

The book depicts copiously not only ritual (e.g., *misogi-haraï*, pp. 78 ff.) but the symbols of myth: such as the primary triad of gem, mirror, and sword (sources of honesty, compassion, and wisdom-strength, p. 154); or the mystic syllables (pp. 306–7); combs; peaches; an endearing array of animals (pp. 100–1 and 105, including horses, *shin-me*, even live ones in temples); and the sacred number 8 (pp. 147 etc.). Mythology itself occupies two-thirds of the volume, and cannot possibly be summarized here. Chapter x, "Genesis of the Universe — The Pre-Material Stages" (with, pp. 250–1, a twelvefold scheme from the scriptural *Kojiki*); Chapter xi, "The Birth of the Land"; Chapter xii, "The Two Joint Rulers of the Universe" (the Sun-Goddess *Amaterasu-ô-mi-kami* and her brother *Susano-wo*) — these breathe a unique, non-Hellenic grace, as do the subsequent stages of the Earthly *Kami* consolidating the land, the Heavenly *Kami* purifying it, and the many versions of the Descent of the Heavenly Grandson, *Ame-no-oshi-ho-mimi*. Gory and comic episodes add all-too-human touches.

Fascinating in their rich detail are Chapters vii and viii, "Collective Worship and Festivals" (*matsuri*), as also the lists of Island-*Kami* (pp. 261 ff.) and Mountain-*Kami* (p. 470), and the hints (pp. 42–43, etc.) of the almost love-hate intercourse between Shintô and Buddhism. The brief, somewhat condescending, single Chapter xxiv, devoted to Sectarian Shintô (as distinct from the "established" Jinja) is followed by an enlightening comparison (pp. 525–32) between "The Shintô Genesis and the Avatars of Vishnu." (Professor Herbert has already proved himself as a universal Asianist.)

In such a faith, which jolts us into revising many basic religious conceptions, the naïve extremism of Emperor-worship (far exceeding any Roman *Realpolitik*) is a sad aberration. On pp. 404–5 you can read the Emperor's Divine genealogical tree, while on p. 129 (and elsewhere) his power is almost judged to be as effective in Heaven as on Earth. Myths, too, veer between the creation of Japan and the creation of the world (Japan certainly comes first), and the kinship of individuals with each other and with nature is sometimes universalist, more often chauvinist. Curiously (p. 311), Shintô has no myth about the creation of Man.

Lovely indeed are the pages illustrating hand-postures (pp. 86–87), seals (pp. 162–4 and 103), and temple designs (pp. 112–13).

This definitive book is excellently produced.

TERENCE WHITE GERVAIS

Is Reality Meaningful? By KELVIN VAN NUYS. (Philosophical Library, New York. 610 pp. 1966. $10.00)

Professor Kelvin Van Nuys has written a massive work on the question of the meaningfulness of reality. This is indeed a question which has always haunted the philosophical consciousness of mankind. The urgency of the problem is brought home to us by the predicament of modern man, whose existential situation is determined by the fact that he finds no meaning in life and no significance in anything. Even more tragic is the fact that even philosophers have contributed to make life absurd and nauseating. Professor Kelvin observes that

> an active loathing of man is dangerously persuasive in our literature and entertainment, because thinkers can find no meaningful reason why man should either be imperfect as they are rediscovering him to be, or constructed as modern biological science has discovered he is.

Only when one feels purpose and reason in reality is one able to rise to the highest achievements and conclude one's life with a sense of fulfilment.

Within this framework the writer deals with the problems involved in epistemology as a theory of knowledge, in ontology as a theory of reality, and in axiology as a theory of value; and ultimately he is led to a discussion of the basic problems of the philosophy of religion: the problems of God and the destiny of man.

It is clear that the writer is quite familiar with the philosophical traditions of the West and, if Eastern wisdom had been taken into account, the perspective would have been much more integral. The writer is always at pains to show how the static thesis of value and reality differs from the dynamic thesis which he seeks to sponsor. But to call every philosophical theory with which we do not agree "static" would be as little justified as to call any political ideology we cannot tolerate reactionary or bourgeois. But there can be no doubt of the author's immense learning and though he is often unnecessarily elaborate the book is not lacking in passages which have a moving appeal. For example, he writes at the end of his book:

> Faith in a God who has created things *meaningfully,* if one practises to get it, may bring him also to serenity about death. Perhaps, whether one ends confident of his personal survival or not, he will at least be ready to say "whatever Thou wilt, so be it."

It is high time that philosophers went back from the Positivist concept of meaning, which robs life of all meaning, to a metaphysical meaning of meaning.

S. VAHIDUDDIN

Meaning For Man. By ROLLIN CHAMBLISS. (Philosophical Library, New York. 191 pp. 1966. $4.50)

The author makes an attempt in this book to analyse and ascertain the nature of man. It is very important that man should know himself, and form an idea of what his ultimate destiny is to be. The author refers to three recent developments which make this enquiry an urgent necessity:

(1) Different culture groups that exist in different parts of the world are being brought into contact with each other owing to rapid means of communication.

(2) The enormous extent of the material Universe as disclosed by our

modern knowledge of astronomy and the Space Theory of the universe. The Earth is just a tiny planet in a Universe of billions upon billions of stars, many of which may be inhabited by living beings much more civilized than ourselves, with capabilities beyond our dreams. Man is just a tiny figure, probably of no consequence, in this Universe!

(3) The increasing seriousness of social disorder. "Social disorder," as the author says, "is nothing new, but heretofore it has threatened only individual tribes, bands, classes and nations; now, it could destroy mankind."

In dealing with the question, the author considers the effect of heredity, environment, personality, reason, freedom, meaning, love, morality, and duty.

The Delphic Oracle, many centuries ago, gave mankind the advice: Know Thyself. This advice is very appropriate today. The author rightly suggests that, in spite of the evil in man, we should not take a pessimistic view of life. He says:

> The ancient Babyloneans displayed confidence and hope; the ancient Egyptians found a joy in their creative activities that is even now an inspiration. The Hebrews rejoiced in their privileged position as God's chosen people; and good Christians faced earthly misfortunes with fortitude because of the vision of eternal life ever before them. The Chinese discovered *Tao* and then needed only to follow it in order to enjoy the good life, and the Hindus found in the doctrine of *Karma* an explanation to reassure and a hope to sustain them.

Civilizations rise and fall. A civilization decays when its members fail to respond adequately to the challenges with which they are faced. After discussing various aspects of the problem, the author rightly suggests that we should avoid spiritual starvation in the midst of material plenty, and exercise modesty and humility in all our undertakings and achievements. This is a very timely publication at this critical phase of our existence on this Earth, when our civilization is based largely on scientific achievements and lays special stress on materialism, ignoring to a large extent the spiritual way of life.

S. L. BHATIA

What's It All About and What Am I? By RICHARD B. GREGG. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 192 pp. 1967. Rs. 5.00)

This book by the Gandhian scholar Richard Gregg deals with the self and its relationship with the eternal reality. Its main argument can be stated briefly. Matter is a form of energy; and if matter has an essence, a meaning can be attained from it. If reality is expressed in terms of matter, there is a meaning to it, which is intangible in essence. There can therefore be no real distinction between subject and object, and reality can only be defined tentatively, as language itself is imperfect. "If the essence of reality is a certain kind of order and pattern, we may then say that meaning is the recognition of that pattern and order. Thus reality and meaning are related." (p. 28) The more we understand this, the closer we are to reality. There are a large number of ways to apprehend reality; first by pluralism, then by dualism, and finally by cognition of self merging into the one reality. Thus, one form of merging is by destruction of the self; this is taught by many faiths, including Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism.

The individual mind is probably a manifestation of the universal. "Know Thyself" leads to the teaching of Jesus when he taught people to deny themselves and follow Him (p. 109). Mere belief is not enough; action is necessary; here there is consensus between the *Koran* and Jesus. The claim of the mystics, therefore, that they have apprehended reality by this means is valid and true.

The Good is a difficult and complicated concept. We have examples of

efforts to do good leading to evil; and also, as in Koranic legends, of seeming evil actions leading to good results. The essence then is understanding.

Every civilization is built on certain assumptions; it is only by understanding them that we can lead ourselves to the true and the good.

This is a simple, wise, and well-ordered book. It is full of quotations from physicists such as Einstein and Bronowski; from teachers such as Jesus and the Buddha; and it distils a great deal of wisdom in a short compass. For beginners in philosophy, it may have one meaning; even for the adept, it has much to teach. Its lucidity combined with methodical learning is its valuable characteristic.

A. A. A. FYZEE

The Grounds of Moral Judgment. By GEOFFREY RUSSELL GRICE. (Cambridge University Press. 208 pp. 1967. 37*s.* 6*d.*; $6.95)

Philosophers who have given up metaphysics are restricted in subject-matter and give lectures and publish books on ethics spun out with a conventional technique, e.g., the constant use of letters, capital and small, in place of nouns, making a quasi-scientific impression.

The author distinguishes between "basic obligation" and "ultra obligation":

> An ultra obligation is an obligation to do more for other people than a basic obligation requires, and it is an obligation to act from altruistic motives. The ground of a proposition of ultra obligation is a proposition whose truth value depends upon the character of the man.

To show that there is moral right — a man taken ill has the right to be told what is wrong with him.

Promises provide difficult problems inasmuch as fulfilment may depend on altered circumstances. Moral obligation differs at different times in the life of the individual — in childhood and in maturity.

The author, like many others of his kind, suffers from inadequate knowledge of words and is unnecessarily troubled through the same word having different meanings, e.g., a dog being "trusted" not to bite as compared with a human being in a position of "trust." The author says that "certain classes cannot have natural rights: animals, the human embryo, future generations, lunatics and children under the age of, say, ten." Surely moral rights devolve on the person exercising them, not on their objects.

The author does not deal with the important issue of the inheritance of mind.

The fundamental question is whether in actual experience beings have a fundamental sense of moral obligation. In the first World War a British soldier might scrounge anything except beer and tobacco. The important thing is the fundamental sense of obligation, not its being limited by conventions.

R. F. RATTRAY

Essays in Miniature. By HARRY HEUSTED. (Philosophical Library, New York. 52 pp. 1965. $2.75)

In this small book the author has expressed his ideas in the form of quotations dealing with all aspects of life. The central theme is that "the intellect, and not the emotions, can give us the best hope for sure happiness." While this may be true to a certain extent the recent thinking is that a harmony between intellect and emotions is most desirable. If a person tries to live by the intellect alone he is liable to miss the mirth of life. Likewise an individual who is nothing but emotional cannot be expected to bear the strain and stress of life with courage and patience.

The author has presented his "thoughts and parables" in the context

of modern American culture. Not only is nature in the American setting depicted in these "miniature essays" but human nature has also found expression in its various dimensions. At certain places we observe universality in expression. To give an example: "A man must open his mouth quite wide to show his wisdom teeth, he need not open it far at all, in talk, to reveal his wisdom." This is a sardonic remark on our chattering civilization. The modern man talks too much and does little to serve suffering humanity. In brief, this is a book which is not only interesting but also instructive.

SITA RAM JAYASWAL

Shilappadikaram (*The Ankle Bracelet*). By PRINCE ILANGO ADIGAL. Translated by ALAIN DANIELOU. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 211 pp. 1967. 25*s*.)

In his Introduction Mr. Daniélou, whose researches into Indian music have been well commended by scholars, says:

I was led to the study of *The Ankle Bracelet* in the course of my work on ancient Indian literature concerning musical theory. The interest of the novel seemed to me so great that I undertook its complete translation. ... I am very grateful to Mr. R. N. Desikan of Madras for his help in preparing the first draft of the translation. ...

While one cannot withhold one's admiration for Mr. Daniélou's courage in undertaking what Ramachandra Dikshitar, translator and editor of the 1939 Oxford University Press edition, called "the most difficult of Tamil classics," one cannot, with the best will in the world, congratulate Mr. Daniélou on his variation of the theme.

There is today a small group of pseudo-Orientalists who, taking advantage of the large market for pornography, publish the bazaar-pavement "literature" of India (*Kamasutra* and *Kokashastra* and similar pornographical works are for sale for a few pence on the bazaar pavements of any Indian city). It is a pity that Mr. Daniélou should have permitted a whiff of this in his translation. For example, he writes (p. 166): "... and one thousand brilliantly dressed *kanjuka*, boy prostitutes with carefully burnished hair." This is how Professor V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar translates this passage: "... and lastly a thousand kanjukas with well-coiffured heads ... ." In a footnote Professor Dikshitar adds:

Kanjukamakkal, literally "men attired in splendid dress." From the context we gather that they were messengers. ... Kanjukin was an important character in Sanskrit dramas. He was generally an attendant on the harem, or chamberlain, and usually an aged Brahmana.

Again, on p. 50, Mr. Daniélou renders a passage: "Intoxicated by desire, she danced the brief, lewd dance of lust (*puravari*)." Shri Dikshitar's translation is: "The minor dance puravari, which drunk with passion, she, whose slender waist could bear no ornaments, danced." And he adds a footnote on *puravari*: "Dance, where the heroine coldly neglects her lover's company."

I could pick out more examples where the new translation panders to the current taste for pornography.

To give a different example of where the sublime has been reduced to the ridiculous, Mr. Daniélou writes (p. 114):

When the seven maidens had each taken from the herd the bull that she had brought up, Madari placed the girls in line and gave each a role to play. Going from west to east, she called them Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, and Si: such were the odd names bestowed by the fragrant-haired Madari.

They are certainly *odd*, for in the second century A.D., the date of the *Shilappadikaram*, Do, Re, Me, were unborn even in Europe. Dikshitar has: "The regular places (of these girls) were kural, tuttam, kaikkilai, ulai, ili, vilari, and taram."

The translator claims that the royal poet was a Jain. It is a minor point; but Sattanar, the friend of Prince Ilangô who narrated the story of Kanaki and Kovalan in the court of King Senguttuvan — narrated it so dramatically that Ilangô decided to write the version known as *Shilappadikaram* — was a Buddhist, according to Professor Dikshitar.

The only improvement on Professor Dikshitar that Mr. Daniélou has effected is where he substitutes "pale" (p. 49) for "sallow-complexioned," which Professor Dikshitar, quoting from the *Tamil Lexicon,* has used. We do not feel able to thank Mr. Daniélou for his version.

J. VIJAYTUNGA

Love Songs of Chandidās: The Rebel Poet-Priest of Bengal. Translated from the Original Bengali with Introduction and Notes by DEBEN BHATTACHARYA. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 172 pp. 31 Plates. 1967. 40*s*.)

Specially prepared for the Indian Series of the Translation Collections of UNESCO, this volume meets a very real need. Despite the fact that Chandidās must be regarded as one of the greatest Bengali poets, in the sense that his love songs are firmly part of the Bengali literary tradition and have exercised a tremendous influence upon such of his successors as Govindadas and Tagore, little is known about him, even in India. We are compelled to sift through the legends and his own songs and ballads to form any kind of picture of the man himself, as distinct from his work; and, since so many other poets, impressed by his reputation — perhaps even to pay him homage — have appropriated his name and imitated his style and themes, thousands of poems have been attributed to him.

All that can be said with any degree of certainty is that he lived from about the end of the fourteenth century to the mid-fifteenth century, that he was connected with the *Sahaja* movement, and that he defied tradition and offended his neighbours by openly associating with the village washer-maid (of low caste) whilst serving as the temple priest. Of the numerous songs ascribed to various Chandidāses only about two hundred can be regarded as the genuine work of the original Chandidās and it is from this authentic material that Deben Bhattacharya has made his excellent selection for the volume under review. There is also an extremely useful introduction which examines the work of Chandidās in relation to the Rādhā-Krishna theme in Bengali poetry, as well as the *Sahaja* movement in general.

If Chandidās did not possess the descriptive powers of Jayadeva, or Vidyapati's ability to depict the essentially feminine, he was superior to both when it came to recreating the whole range of emotions in the man-woman relationship, and his Rādhā is a real woman rather than a stylized literary portrait.

HOWARD SERGEANT

Rāmaśataka of KAVI SRI SOMESVARA. Ed. by AGAMAPRABHAKARA MUNI PUNYAVIJAYA and B. J. SANDESARA (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 147. xii+120 pp. Rs. 10.00); *Śaṅkha-Parābhava-Vyāyoga.* By HARIHARA. Ed. by B. J. SANDESARA. (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, No. 148. vii+26 pp. Rs. 4.00) (Oriental Institute, Baroda. 1965.)

This is by no means the first time that the Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda, publishes the work of "a prominent poet in the literary circle of Vastupāla," Minister of the Vāghela feudatories of the Caulukyas in the thirteenth century A.D. A play (*nāṭaka*) by this very author in eight Acts, the *Ullāgharāghava,* dramatizing the story of the entire *Rāmāyaṇa,* was published by the same editors in 1961 as No. 132 in this very Series. Like the *Sūryaśataka* of Mayūra, on which this is obviously

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modelled, this also contains 101 verses, the last of these being colophonic and in the *Upajāti* metre; the metre of the remaining hundred, which give the text of the *Stotra,* is *Sragdharā*.

The verses of the hymn are all easy and elegant. They show clearly the devotional fervour of a mature poet with a very good command of the Sanskrit language. Two good commentaries, the *Hṛdayarañjanī* of Ekanātha and the *Bālabodhinī* of anonymous authorship, are available on this devotional poem, and these accompany the text. As an Appendix comes the *Rāmaśata* of Keśava, which has an identical theme.

Śaṅkha-Parābhava-Vyāyoga is probably the second historical play published in this Series. The earlier play (G.O.S., No. 10) is the *Hammīramadamardana* of Jayasimhasūri, dramatizing, in five acts, the repulsion by King Vīradhavala of the attack on Gujarat by the Muslim warrior Hammīra during *Saṁvat* 1276–86 (A.D. 1220–30). The Hindu King's victory was possible only through the intelligent diplomacy of his able ministers, Vastupāla and Tejaḥpāla. The present play, in one Act (*Vyāyoga*), describes the "defeat of Śaṅkha" (*Śaṅkhaparābhava*), the son of Sindhuraja, the ruler of Lāṭa, in a fierce battle with Vastupāla, Governor of Stambhatīrtha (Cambay). The author is Harihara, another great poet in the literary circle of Vastupāla, the astute Minister of the Caulukya Kings. For a time he seems to have been disliked by Someśvara, the "hereditary priest of the Caulukya Kings" and a great poet with an established reputation at the same court. But the two literary luminaries seem to have become friends later on at the intervention of Vastupāla (p. ii). A peculiar characteristic of this play is that the Stage-Manager is referred to by two terms, *Sthāpaka* and *Sūtradhāra*.

Both these publications are valuable contributions to Sanskrit literature in general and Gujarat history in particular.

H. G. NARAHARI

Commonwealth Poems of Today. Edited by HOWARD SERGEANT. (Published for the English Association by John Murray, London. 228 pp. 1967. 25*s*.)

In compiling this anthology, the editor has shown remarkable judgement, and the quality of the verse selected is unusually high for this kind of volume. Mr. Sergeant shows himself aware of the dangers inherent in the book's very title when, in a sensible and informative Introduction, he observes that the expression "Commonwealth poetry" is largely one of convenience. The object of the volume, in fact, is simply to give the reader an idea of what is being written over a large area of the English-speaking world, and the editor sees it as his function to indicate what, in his opinion, is the best of this writing. This function he fulfils admirably. He might very easily have fallen into the traps which await those who search for a common theme in the Commonwealth. He might very easily have selected poems, particularly from Africa, because of their "significance" in relation to social or aesthetic doctrines. But he remains throughout a man with a sensitive ear for the fine poem, and it is this which he almost invariably offers us.

It is difficult to single out any section or individual poet for particular praise in this collection. Its particular quality is the trust which it establishes in the reader of the editor's judgement. In so many anthologies of Commonwealth verse, the indifferent quality of so much of the contents can create in the reader a casualness or indifference which may prevent him from seeing the real poem when it is before his eyes. There is little danger of this happening with Mr. Sergeant's selection.

PAUL EDWARDS

A Lamp for India: The Story of Madame Pandit. By ROBERT HARDY ANDREWS. (Arthur Barker Ltd., London. 406 pp. Illustrated. 1967. 42*s.*)

This book by an American writer, who was also a personal friend of the Nehru family in India, represents the third biography to date of Jawaharlal's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.

I have not read *Madame Ambassador* by a fellow American, Anne Guthrie, but in reviewing Vera Brittain's *Envoy Extraordinary* for THE ARYAN PATH (November 1965), I commented that the real heroine seemed to be India. One suspects that the same comment might well apply to Miss Guthrie's book with its very similar title. And now Mr. Andrews comes along to complete the trilogy!

No book about India could be dull. It is only surprising that, with three biographies to her name, Smt. Pandit still does not emerge as a very real person in her own right — only as a public personage. Mr. Andrews' account of her life and times is more detailed than Miss Brittain's, but adds little to our understanding of its subject (however this is viewed). His judgements are too often phrased in sentimental clichés, and his standpoint is frankly partisan. On the questions of Pakistan and Goa, for instance, the story we are given might have come straight from government information services. This has the unfortunate effect of appearing not to be true, even when it is! "My country (or *her* country) right or wrong" is no more valid for India than for England — or China.

One feels that Smt. Pandit herself would apply more stringent standards. She was always aware of the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the Indian independence movement to which she and her family sacrificed so much. She sent her two elder daughters to America to avoid their contamination by the "protest" mentality:

> Independence, to too many, is coming to mean not merely the end of British rule; it means solution of every problem. Belief that the British are to blame for everything that is wrong stops thinking where it should begin.

In the event, independence brought tragedy as well as triumph, with partition, inter-communal riots, and the slaughter of Indian by Indian; followed by the years of struggle against poverty and famine. Nehru's dream of the democratic, secular state has possibly suffered greater defeat from India's two hundred and fifty million sacred cows than ever the British inflicted!

MARGARET TIMS

The Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition: An Outline of What the Philosophers Thought and Christians Taught on the Subject. By G. R. S. MEAD. (Stuart and Watkins, London. 109 pp. Second impression, re-set, 1967. 21*s.*)

Professor H. H. Price reviewed the 1919 edition of this little book in "New Books and Old" (THE ARYAN PATH, November 1958), finding it "very interesting and very scholarly." Today there is in the field of science a growing interest in parapsychology, as well as a transformation, thanks to space-probe discoveries, of the cosmic world-picture into a pattern of a more energic, biological character, hinting at a "curious new twentieth-century astrology"; and in the field of the arts, there are signs of a returning interest in the Platonic and Hermetic traditions; so that, on both counts, the reprint of this book is welcome.

Mead presents — mainly from Neo-Platonic writings of the early Christian era — the concepts of the higher and lower aspects of the subtle body of man — "The Spirit Body" and "The Radiant Body." These sections of the book are preceded by a survey of the earlier strands of thought, astrological, alchemical, Hermetic, Mithraic, and many others which have contributed to the concepts; they are followed by an examination of the early Christian dis-

putes about the nature of "The Resurrection Body," whether fleshly or spiritual. In a brief Epilogue he proffers this ancient concept of the Subtle Body as a working hypothesis for present-day researchers into unexplained psychic phenomena and psychological puzzles. It may well be that the time is more ripe now to re-present the idea. Mead makes it clear that in exploring the seeming *terra incognita* of inner space we must realize first that it has been mapped before, centuries back, even in the West. One might add, also, that every renaissance is preceded by a return to the past.

L. MARR

BALDOON DHINGRA

Leaves from a Cologne Diary

WHEN my good friends, Gerda and Ernst Sagebiel, invited me to stay with them I knew what it would mean: peace and quiet in a lovely home close to an enchanting forest where walks, what with the thick carpet of golden leaves to tread on, are as rich as they are varied. For me, coming from the incredible din of Paris streets, this is a revelation. It is only after a few days that one comes to recognize the eloquent speech of silences, far greater than words when even the shrubs speak to you and you are willing to stoop to listen. But the element of peace is so much heightened for me because there is such a profound understanding between Gerda and Ernst, who have achieved this, not by any miraculous means, but because, step by step, they have arrived at the mutual recognition of two people co-operating in life's adventure.

It is true that outer circumstances and a disciplined way of life diminish problems; for one masters them better when they come. And this is what the Sagebiels have done. They have found that living close to nature and becoming part of it was a good beginning; a well-cared-for garden with a thousand plants was another step, and the innate wish to watch each plant grow and to help its progress was part of it. When one comes to terms with or recognizes the miracles of nature one's own inner resources are strengthened. And that is what these two clearly felt; so, in discovering the wizardries of trees, they were able to see the complexities in themselves: and these were soon dissolved.

Into the house at 9 Brahmsstrasse, shaped like a church from the outside, much thought and love have entered; the result is an atmosphere of unruffled calm. When some ripples of anxiety appear on the surface these are quickly dispelled; for there is a strong reserve to combat them.

Ernst may not be a believer in any organized religion but he has an innate sense of morality and of justice and he goes firmly on with whatever he does from day to day, his office work, his engagements, and the delectable pleasures of life such as golf, riding, and entertaining friends. To Ernst the road to paradise is a straight line; the path has its ups and downs, but it leads to the end — and that is all. "One step is enough for me," he will say, and he will not look backwards with regret.

"One thing you must never do," Ernst told Gerda when they were about to get married, "never, never say, Had we done this, that would have happened." And Gerda promised and never went back on her word.

Nature's wonders are not to them separate things. "When I climb the mountains," Gerda said, "I become a part of them, and that is also true of trees, animals and plants."

"Animals are so easy to understand,

Take our boxer, Pasha, for instance. There he is, exulting in the simplest pleasures, and we make life so complicated."

"That is true," I said, "because we have a dozen or more animals in us; all of them seeking admittance into our many selves. Sometimes they crowd in all together, causing total confusion; at other times, one particular animal in us takes possession and we are overpowered. The animals in us are much stronger than we realize; but there is at the same time another force that takes us higher than our animal kingdom, into a realm that we may call cosmic. But we can't really subdue the animals in us; we come to terms with them. Then the conflict ceases."

We were walking slowly by the waters. It was quiet and the path was clear. Pasha was in his element and for all this cold — under a cloudless sky — he was drinking water from all the puddles he came across.

"Have you any wishes unfulfilled?" I asked Ernst.

"No," he said, "none. I am so completely fulfilled that if death were to claim me now I would say: I'm ready." I was struck by his answer. There was no element of pride in it, nor any complacence, but a sense of fearlessness. "Yes," continued Ernst, "I have had all that life could offer me and satisfaction in so many spheres that I am content. I don't believe in the life beyond."

"I can say that, too, I suppose," Gerda said, "but some questions elude me."

I felt this came from an innate optimism. "But life has not really been a battle for you, has it? Things have been plain sailing," I added.

"We've had our difficulties in our work, but it was always a victory at every step. The hurdles tumbled. Ernst has a singleness of purpose and he pursues it with hard work, zeal, and enthusiasm. We find that life becomes so much simpler if we do things with precision."

I could see that; for in every nook and corner of the house thought and precision, to the minutest detail, had entered. The house, as well as the garden and all that went with it, showed taste. Everything, as one would expect in a German household, was meticulously kept. There was clockwork alacrity, even when a slight indisposition occurred, for one must not let these little inconveniences get the better of one. Of course, this attitude to life is an aspect of the German genius: its exponents have often been marked by strength of character to a high degree. What strikes me in this home is the great ability to recognize and develop new ideas to effective ends.

We talked, inevitably, of how peace could be brought among men. Was there to be scope for many ideas or must technology reduce all mankind to automats? Was there such a thing as genuine internationalism? I knew that I found little of it anywhere, for people were becoming more national-minded than ever. Nationalism, spurred on by pride, has often, under the impetus of trade rivalries, expanded into modern imperialism. Didn't they think, I asked, that the real problem lay in that every country's self-interest was ranked above the interests and rights of all other nations and so admitted of no duties towards them? A few rich countries, notably France, recognize this sense of duty. The world would acquire equilibrium, Ernst felt, when interdependence had gained the same value as salvation or equality. We agreed that there has to be a pooling of resources; it is an absolute moral necessity. There is need for economic unity in business and spiritual unity too — an aspiration conceived by Condorcet.

"What is your idea of happiness?" I asked both Gerda and Ernst.

"Why, to be able to do things for others."

"Not with a halo around your head."

"Without a halo, of course."

"In that case sainthood is out."

"Definitely."

"We do our daily actions, whatever they are, from cleaning floors to sipping coffee and eating chocolate cake,

with conscious joy — so even tedious tasks become pleasurable."

This, at any rate, during my several days' stay, I discovered. Each task had a purpose.

I have known Ernst for twenty years and Gerda for so much longer. There was always an ideal which moved them, and now after twenty-seven years of marriage they have grown in stature and in years. Ernst knows with certainty the path he has to tread and Gerda has made this path her ideal, for the result is a fine comradeship born of adjustment, sympathy.

Many people, Gerda and Ernst among them, recognize God in Nature more readily than within themselves. But this can be, and often is, a beginning. When people discover that their personalities extend as far as the limits of the universe, and that their ego is merely a wave in the ocean, they recognize their own divinity.

I have felt, during my stay here, that life is seen as a round of duties and responsibilities, and that any idea of what people call "liberty" can only be achieved by performing all tasks as duties. There is little room for spontaneity, but all acts well done — as Gandhiji would have said — are vital to our lives, and only then can true spontaneity be born. For what we often mistake for spontaneity is impulsive action sprung from an unbalanced and disorderly mind. And that is quite absent in 9 Brahmsstrasse — the art of the house, its surroundings, the rooms, the furniture, the books, and the curios reflect beauty in all its forms; and it is in this studied perfection that the right kind of balance is achieved. There is an absence of discord, mental and physical. There is time for speech and for action, as there is time also for silence. If I leave here replenished it is because all duties are accepted joyfully and without cries of despair.

BALDOON DHINGRA

BRIAN G. COOPER

A Letter from Edinburgh

THE RELATIONSHIP between man's capacity for aesthetic creativity and appreciation and his potentiality for spiritual awareness and understanding is a very subtle one. Certainly the creation and enjoyment of beauty and harmony is closely related to, indeed interpenetrates, religious experience. I was strongly reminded of this at the 1967 Edinburgh international festival of the arts. The appeal of music and the dance, or the vision of the artist, for example, is not confined to man's mental processes. Rather they can suffuse the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. Undoubtedly we in the West are too prone to divide the essential totality and unity of the human personality into labelled compartments. The Eastern religio-philosophical tradition is wiser.

It is a curious but revealing insight into the contemporary Western mentality that we speak of "religious drama" at all. Drama by its very nature is, or should be, religious; in its formative stages in the West it was taken for granted that it would be thoroughly religious; elsewhere it usually remains so today. For anyone seeking to understand the development of the religious outlook in the West, knowledge of the role of "religious drama" is consequently very valuable. Indian readers interested in the vision of God and Man present in medieval Western Christian spirituality, and indeed deeply influential in the Christian tradition as a whole, should acquaint themselves with the Everyman theme in morality plays. The *Everyman* performed in St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral at Edinburgh made

me reflect on the enormous significance of this perennial theme.

The morality play emerged out of the earlier medieval mystery play, and from the mid-fourteenth to the mid-sixteenth century was the dominant form of drama and the major form of popular religious expression in the West, and one especially popular in England. Mime, dance, comedy, tragedy all combined in a single dramatic form, whose main purpose was to declare to all classes of society the evanescent nature of things temporal and the need to live in the scale of things eternal, setting their eyes on the heavenly kingdom. The wide-spread use of allegorical figures in the poetry, sculpture, and painting of that age had its counterpart in the employment of personified Virtues and Vices on the stage. At Edinburgh the *Everyman,* performed according to a text dating from about 1495, brought out all these elements well: the audience was conscious, as is the reader of such texts, of the this-worldly affairs of life being gradually caught up in, and indeed translated into, the eternal realm. In *Everyman,* Man is summoned by Death to go on a journey that will take him via the grave to eternity. He must prepare himself, seek the solace of friends, count his good deeds, seek the religious way to understanding, forsake material possessions, and go forth in humble hope in God. God, Death, Good Deeds, Knowledge, Strength, Discretion, and Beauty are among the characters represented in the colourful manner normal in that century: yet the theme is timeless, the impact deep, the message relevant. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

The Christian *Everyman* has a special world-wide interest for its link with Buddhism, there being much evidence of a Buddhist source for the Christian allegory. In the Buddhist text, Man is summoned on a journey, and three of his wives, representing wealth, the body, and human companions, refuse to go with him. A fourth wife, symbolic of his intentions and deeds, accompanies him: Man's subsequent incarnation is decided according to the deeds of the previous life. In the Christian story the latter element is replaced by the doctrine of the Judgement: works of charity and mercy, and submission to the Church, enable Man to escape Damnation and enter Paradise. The Christian text goes back to the *Barlaam and Josaphat* of St. John Damascene in the eighth century, having come to Damascus from Buddhist literature earlier.

If the *Everyman* typified a universal spiritual theme whose literary expression exemplifies the cross-fertilization of East-West religious traditions, Edinburgh offered also a very different, yet in its own way equally universal, example of man's religious awareness in the Grail presentation, *The Cross in the West.* Grail is a Roman Catholic organization devoted to unity; the presentation sketched the distinctive Celtic religious tradition of Scotland and Ireland, with its strange art forms, homespun poetry and saints like Columba. Yet Celtic Christianity must have a universal appeal, for its God is a deity for everyman and everyday, its spirituality one in which sea, sky, land, animals, trees, and humans are united in a great paean of praise to the Love omnipresent within the universe. If only such a spirituality could be the life of our rushed and tired Western world!

BRIAN G. COOPER

Ends and Sayings

"... ends of verse
And sayings of philosophers."
—SAMUEL BUTLER: *Hudibras*

Increasingly, scientists seem to fall into two groups. There are those who believe that mankind has reached a point of godlike development, with the possibility of total mastery over Nature by modifying natural processes to create a world to suit its own convenience. This was the theme of the social anthropologist, Dr. Edmund Leach, Provost of King's College, Cambridge University, in his first talk, 12 November 1967, in the Reith Lectures on "A Runaway World." He denied anything "intrinsically virtuous about law and order." Man need not, he claimed, fear chaos in "a world of accelerating change" since he can now take charge of his own destiny and change Nature at his will, according to his own value judgements.

The peak of scientific arrogance and materialism is generally assumed to have been in the period ending the last century, before the fresh break-through into the nature of matter, with all the subsequent discoveries and changes in the world-picture; but obviously, and disturbingly, this same short-sightedness (both in hindsight and foresight) is still current today. Is it not a fact that scientific and technical developments have dangerously outpaced the moral character and social responsibility of the general run of mankind? Perhaps it was wisdom, in ancient times, that made the sacerdotal class keep scientific knowledge secret, out of the irresponsible hands of the temporal powers and the masses.

Happily, there are also scientists today with a more proportioned approach, and minds more open to admit that man, in his empirical efforts to recognize Nature's balance and control, may be working in a wrong direction, and must instead *learn from* and *work with* Nature. C. E. Dyte, Principal Scientific Officer at ARC Pest Infestation Laboratory, Slough, England, refers (*New Scientist,* 16 November 1967) to some of the problems arising from the use of synthetic insecticides. Some cause harm to useful insects and wild life generally. Some merely encourage new pesticide-resistant insect strains — a hundred such now being known. Mr. Dyte points out how ancient the plant-insect relationship is, and though man has known some of the insecticidal and medicinal properties of plants for centuries, synthetic products are in their infancy.

Some plants have developed minor constituents that attract or repel insects, or are similar to insect growth-regulating hormones. Insects have developed various techniques for dealing with toxic plants, e.g., selecting the non-toxic juices, or excreting rapidly to prevent any toxic build-up. Plants in response have developed synergists (substances not normally toxic, but which increase the toxic action of the plant on the pest). Sesame oil is such a synergist, and sesame seeds have long been a popular addition to bread and such like in the East. Some three hundred different compounds with similar composition have been isolated from plants. Dr. Dyte concludes:

> For too long the fact that plants have been concerned with insect control for many millions of years before man became interested has been ignored. If we are prepared to learn from their experience we may be better able to help our crop plants to protect themselves against insect pests.

The whole article is worth reading, for its facts, and for the approach it indicates. It raises too, by implication, the question "What intelligence in the plant is it that evolves, and transforms experience into amazing capacities whose

complex working is still largely unknown to us?"

The Butler Act in 1944 made "religious instruction" compulsory in schools in Britain. The general outlook has now become less fundamentalist and more varied and, on 15 November 1967, there was a well-supported debate, and a fair measure of agreement, in the House of Lords (*Times Educational Supplement*, 17 November 1967), on the question of bringing religious education more in line with present-day needs.

Lord Aberdare suggested that religious teaching should start with religious implications drawn from problems in life, rather than from dicta to be followed. Church-going had largely dropped to occasional special visits. Through immigrants, schools had become aware of other religions than Christianity. The quality of religious instruction had much room for improvement. Religious broadcasts to schools offered an encourging field, with the proviso that the approach should be open enough to help pupils to make their own commitments to any faith and way of life.

According to the Lord Chancellor, research seemed to show parents were still desirous of some religious education for their children. Lord Butler agreed that it should not be imposed on children whose parents were against it, and that its scope could well be widened to include references to great figures in world history, such as Socrates. The Bishop of London, referring to a recent Church of England enquiry on the subject, affirmed that the churches' concern should be not with indoctrination, but with the development of the whole man. Lord Sackville argued that religious instruction should be compulsory, and taught in a positive denominational way, while Viscount Eccles held that since religion was not definable as an agreed good in the way that wholesome nutrition for the body was, it should not be made compulsory by any Act of Parliament. It was better for people to think out their own beliefs instead of passively accepting authority. Lord Willis felt strongly that teaching should not be about only one religion, presented in a one-sided and untruthful way. The 1944 Act "gave God the official recognition of the Law. ... The existence of God was not a matter that could be decided at a Cabinet meeting, or by a Parliamentary division ... Parliament might one day vote that there was not a God — and then where would the churches be?" The Bishop of Chichester affirmed his conviction in the value of religious education as a "compulsory," or as he would prefer to call it, "universal" element, since the religious element must be included in a fully-rounded education. It may be added that there was, generally, support in the debate for teaching about the other, non-Christian religions.

The Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland recently celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the first Buddhist Group in the British Isles, founded in London on 3 November 1907 by a young English Buddhist, the Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya, whose original inspiration, Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia,* had sent him eastward for training and ordination. In 1903 he inaugurated the Buddhasasana Samagama and planned to extend its work from the East to the West, as was done in 1907. In *The Middle Way* (November 1967) Christmas Humphreys gives an interesting historical survey of the earlier society, which aimed to bring together the devotee, for whom Buddhism was essentially a way of life, and the scholar, whose interest was fundamentally the objective study of Buddhist literature. Interest in the movement increased and held through the war years, and the Society lasted till 1926. Through the deaths of the earlier supporters, the work of the pioneering group was gradually replaced by that of the present Buddhist Society, which developed as a separate organization out of the Buddhist Lodge of the Theosophical Society

in 1924. Today there are a number of small Buddhist societies affiliated with it in Britain, as well as other independent organizations. Buddhism is probably the non-Christian religion — some would prefer to call it a philosophy — best known by repute to the ordinary man in the West. And the activities of Buddhist groups have undoubtedly contributed to the breaking down of sectarian barriers, and to the increasing interest in comparative religion.

In a period of financial uncertainty like the present, with heavy increases in taxation and general rising costs everywhere, activities of a non-profit-making cultural character are often the earliest victims, since they are usually dependent on individual generosity which does not always recognize the value of "intangibles." Since 1903 the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association has maintained Keats's last home in the Piazza di Spagna at Rome, as an "outpost of British culture." It is concerned chiefly with the four poets, Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Leigh Hunt, and their circle. In addition to the pious task of caring for the graves at Rome of Keats and Shelley, and others intimately connected with them, Keats's house itself is used as a memorial museum and library (ten thousand books), open free to interested students. But now the Association, feeling the chill wind of financial insufficiency, is uncertain how long, with its present income, it will be able to keep the Memorial in existence. It would be a pity if this "English heritage," with all its wide influence, has to be dispersed and destroyed for lack of funds. The Association therefore has sent out a special appeal (with a poem written by Edmund Blunden for the occasion), asking for donations for the Memorial house. Also desired are more "Friends" of the Association (minimum subscription £1.1.0 a year), who receive, in addition, the illustrated Bulletin of the Association (devoted to the poets' group and their work), as well as invitations to the lectures and meetings periodically organized. Donations, subscriptions, or Deeds of Covenant may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, Barclays Bank, West End Foreign Branch, 1 Pall Mall East, London s.w.1.

I WAS therefore writing "for children" only in the sense that I excluded what I thought they would not like or understand; not in the sense of writing what I intended to be below adult attention. I may of course have been deceived, but the principle at least saves one from being patronizing. I never wrote down to anyone; and whether the opinion condemns or acquits my own work, it certainly is my opinion that a book worth reading only in childhood is not worth reading even then. The inhibitions which I hoped my stories would overcome in a child's mind may exist in a grown-up's mind too, and may perhaps be overcome by the same means.

The Fantastic or Mythical is a Mode available at all ages for some readers: for others, at none. At all ages, if it is well used by the author and meets the right reader, it has the same power: to generalize while remaining concrete, to present in palpable form not concepts or even experiences but whole classes of experience, and to throw off irrelevancies. But at its best it can do more; it can give us experiences we have never had and thus, instead of "commenting on life," can add to it.

— C. S. LEWIS: *Of Other Worlds*